

1  
ANNOTATIONS

B Y

SAM. JOHNSON & GEO. STEEVENS,

A N D

THE VARIOUS COMMENTATORS

U P O N

*O T H E L L O,*

W R I T T E N B Y

WILL. SHAKSPERE.

---

---

—*SIC ITUR AD ASTRA.*

VIRG.

---

---

L O N D O N :

*Printed for, and under the Direction of,*

JOHN BELL, British-Library, STRAND,

Bookseller to His Royal Highness the PRINCE of WALES.

M D C C L X X X V I I .



# ANNOTATIONS

BY

JAMES JOHNSON & GEO. STEELE

AND

THE VARIOUS COMMENTATORS

OF THE

WRITTEN BY

WILL. SHAKSPERE

IN THREE VOLUMES

LONDON:

Printed by J. Smith, and sold by the Booksellers,  
John Bate, George Bate, and George Bate,  
Rochester is his Royal Highness the Duke of Devonshire's  
Library.





# ANNOTATIONS

UPON

## OTHELLO.

---

### ACT I.

*Line 1.* *NEVER* tell me,] The quartos read, *Tush,*  
never tell, &c. STEEVENS.

4. *But you'll not, &c.*] The first quarto reads,  
'*Sblood* but you, &c. STEEVENS.

9. *Oft capp'd to him;—*] Thus the quarto. The  
folio reads, *Off-capp'd to him.* STEEVENS.

*Off-capp'd* is, I believe, the true reading. So, in  
*Antony and Cleopatra.*

“ I have ever held my *cap off* to thy fortunes..”  
MALONE.

To *cap* is to salute, by taking off the cap. It is still an  
academick phrase. MONCK MASON.

15. —*certes,*] i. e. certainly, obsolete. STEEVENS.

19. *One Michael Cassio, a Florentine, a fellow almost*  
*damn'd in a fair wife ;*] This is one of the passages  
which must for the present be resigned to corruption



and obscurity. I have nothing that I can, with any approach to confidence, propose. JOHNSON.

The great difficulty is, to understand in what sense any man can be said to be *almost damn'd in a fair wife*; or *fair phyz*, as Sir T. Hanmer proposes to read. I cannot find any ground for supposing that either the one or the other has been reputed to be a damnable sin in any religion. The poet has used the same mode of expression in *The Merchant of Venice*, act i. sc. i.

“ O! my Anthonio, I do know of those  
 “ Who therefore only are reputed wise,  
 “ For saying nothing; who, I’m very sure,  
 “ If they should speak, would *almost damn* those ears,  
 “ Which, hearing them, would call their brothers  
   fools.”

And there the allusion is evident to the gospel judgment against those, who call their brothers fools. I am therefore inclined to believe, that the true reading here is,

A fellow almost damn'd in a fair *life*;  
 and that Shakspeare alludes to the judgment denounced in the gospel against those *of whom all men speak well*.

The character of Cassio is certainly such, as would be very likely to draw upon him all the peril of this denunciation, literally understood. Well-bred, easy, sociable, good-natured; with abilities enough to make him agreeable and useful, but not sufficient to excite the envy of his equals, or to alarm the jealousy of his superiors. It may be observed too, that Shakspeare has thought it proper to make Iago, in several other passages,



passages, bear his testimony to the amiable qualities of his rival. In act v. line 18.

If Cassio do remain,  
He hath *a daily beauty in his life*,  
That makes me ugly.

I will only add, that however hard or far-fetch'd this allusion (whether Shakspeare's, or only mine) may seem to be, archbishop Sheldon had exactly the same conceit, when he made that singular compliment, as the writer calls it, [Biog. Britan. Art. TEMPLE] to a nephew of Sir William Temple, that "he had the curse of the gospel, because all men spoke well of him."

TYRWHITT.

Mr. Tyrwhitt's ingenious emendation is supported by a passage in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, where *good life* is used for a *fair character*: "Defend your reputation, or bid farewell to your *good life* for ever."

MALONE.

The poet, I think, does not appear to have meant Iago to be a Florentine, which has hitherto been inferred from the following passage in act iii. line 42. where Cassio, speaking of Iago, says,

——I never knew

A Florentine more kind and honest.

It is surely not uncommon for us to say, in praise of a foreigner, that we never knew one of our own countrymen of a more friendly disposition. This, I believe, is all that Cassio meant by his observation.

From the already-mentioned passage in act iii. line 292. it is certain (as Sir T. Hanmer has observed) that Iago was a Venetian:

A iij

I know



I know *our country disposition* well ;  
In Venice they do let Heaven see the pranks  
They dare not shew their husbands.

Again, act v. line 95 :

Alas ! my friend, and my dear *countryman*,  
*Roderigo*, &c.

*Gra.* What of *Venice* ?

*Iago.* Even he, &c.

That Cassio, however, was *married*, is not sufficiently implied in the words, *a fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife*, since they may mean, according to Iago's licentious manner of expressing himself, no more than a man *very near being married*. This seems to have been the case in respect to Cassio, act iv. line 140. Iago, speaking to him of Bianca, says—*Why the cry goes that you shall marry her*. Cassio acknowledges that such a report has been raised, and adds, *This is the monkey's own giving out : she is persuaded I will marry her out of her own love and self-flattery, not out of my promise*. Iago then, having heard this report before, very naturally circulates it in his present conversation with Roderigo.

If Shakspeare, however, designed *Bianca* for a courtesan of *Cyprus* (where Cassio had not yet been, and had therefore never seen her) Iago cannot be supposed to allude to the report concerning his marriage with her, and consequently this part of my argument must fall to the ground.

Had Shakspeare, consistently with Iago's character, meant to make him say that Cassio was *actually damn'd*



*in being married to a handsome woman*, he would have made him say it *outright*, and not have interposed the palliative *almost*. Whereas what he says at present amounts to no more than that (however near his marriage) he is not yet *completely damn'd*, because he is not *absolutely married*. The succeeding parts of Iago's conversation sufficiently evince, that the poet thought no mode of conception or expression too brutal for the character.

STEEVENS.

*A fellow almost damn'd in a FAIR wife*] Ingenious as Mr. Tyrwhitt's conjecture may appear, it but ill accords with the context. Iago is enumerating the disqualifications of Cassio for his new appointment; but surely *his being spoken well of by all men* could not be one of them. It is evident from what follows, that a report had prevailed at Venice, of Cassio's being soon to be married to "the most FAIR Bianca." Now as she was in Shakspeare's language "a customer," it was with a view to such a connexion that Iago called the new lieutenant *a fellow almost damn'd*. It may be gathered from various circumstances, that an intercourse between Cassio and Bianca had existed before they left Venice; for Bianca is not only well known to Iago at Cyprus, but she upbraids Cassio, (act iii. line 785.) with having been absent a *week* from her, when he had not been *two days* on the island. Hence, and from what Cassio himself relates (act iv. line 148.)—" *I was, the other day, talking on the SEABANK WITH CERTAIN VENETIANS; and THITHER comes the bauble; by this hand she falls thus about my neck—*"



*neck—*” it may be presumed she had secretly followed him to Cyprus : a conclusion not only necessary to explain the passage in question, but to preserve the consistency of the fable at large.—The *sea-bank*, on which Cassio was conversing with certain Venetians, was at Venice ; for he had never, till the day before, been at Cyprus : he specifies those with whom he conversed as *Venetians*, because he was himself a *Florentine*, and he mentions the behaviour of Bianca in their presence, as tending to corroborate the report she had spread, that he was soon to marry her. HENLEY.

23. —*theorick*,] *Theorick* for *theory*. So in the *Proceedings against Garnet on the Powder Plot*, “as much deceived in the *Theoricke* of trust, as the lay disciples were in the practicke of conspiracie.” STEEVENS.

24. *Wherein the tongued consuls—*] So the generality of the impressions read : but the oldest quarto has it *toged* ; the senators that assisted the duke in council, in their proper *gowns*. THEOBALD.

Consuls : *the rulers of the state* or civil governors.

The word is used by Marlow, in the same sense, in *Tamburlaine*, a tragedy, 1591 :

“Both we will raigne as *consuls* of the earth.”

MALONE.

By *toged*, perhaps, is meant *peaceable*, in opposition to the *warlike* qualifications of which he had been speaking. He might have formed the word, in allusion to the Latin adage—*Cedant arma togæ*. STEEVENS.

29. —*must be led and calm'd*] *Be-lee'd* suits to *calm'd*,  
and



and the measure is not less perfect than in many other places. JOHNSON.

*Be-lee'd* and *becalm'd* are terms of navigation.

I have been inform'd that one vessel is said to be in the *Lee* of another, when it is so placed that the wind is intercepted from it. Iago's meaning therefore is, that Cassio had got the wind of him, and *becalm'd* him from going on.

To *becalm* (as I learn from Falconer's *Marine Dictionary*) is likewise to obstruct the current of the wind in its passage to a ship, by any contiguous object.

STEEVENS.

30. —*this counter-caster* ;] It was anciently the practice to reckon up sums with *counters*. To this Shakspeare alludes again in *Cymbeline*, act v.

And in *Acolastus*, a comedy, 1540: "I wyl cast my *counters*, or with *counters*, make all my reckonynge."

STEEVENS.

32. *And I, God bless the mark!*] So the quarto. The folio (to avoid the penalty of the statute, 3d of James I. c. i. which lays a penalty for the profane use of the Name of God in Stage Plays, &c.) reads, "And I, bless the mark." MALONE.

—*bless the mark!*] Kelly, in his comments on Scots proverbs, observes, that the Scots, when they compare person to person, use this exclamation.

STEEVENS.

*God save the mark!*] is used by Hotspur in a similar sense. \* \* \*

32. *his Moorship's*—] The first quarto reads—*his worship's*— STEEVENS.



35. *by letter —*] *By recommendation from powerful friends.* JOHNSON.

36. *Not by the old gradation, —*] *Old gradation is gradation established by ancient practice.* JOHNSON.

38. *I in any just term am affin'd.*] *Affined is the reading of the third quarto and the first folio. The second quarto and all the modern editions have assign'd. The meaning is, Do I stand within any such terms of propinquity or relation to the Moor, as that it is my duty to love him?* JOHNSON.

49. *honest knaves. —*] *Knave is here for servant, but with a mixture of sly contempt.* JOHNSON.

64. *In compliment extern, —*] *In that which I do only for an outward shew of civility.* JOHNSON.

So, in Sir W. D'Avenant's *Albovine*, 1629:

“ —that in sight *extern*

“ A patriarch seems.”

STEEVENS.

66. *For daws —*] *The first quarto reads, for doves —* STEEVENS.

*Doves* are still called *Doues* in the eastern counties of the kingdom by the common people, who both in speaking and writing have but partially admitted the *v*. \* \* \*

*What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe?*] *Full fortune is, I believe, a complete piece of good fortune; as, in another scene of this play, a full soldier is put for a complete soldier. To owe, is in ancient language, to own, to possess.* STEEVENS.

78. *As when, by night and negligence, the fire  
Is spy'd in populous cities.*] *By night and  
negligence*



negligence means, during the time of night and negligence.

MONCK MASON.

86. *Are your doors lock'd?*] The first quarto reads,  
Are *all* doors lock'd? STEEVENS.

90. —*is burst.*]—i. e. broken. *Burst* for *broke* is used in our author's *King Henry IV.* p. 2. “—and then he *burst* his head for crowding among the marshal's men.” STEEVENS.

113. *Grange.*]—this is Venice;

My house is not a *grange*.—

STEEVENS.

That is, “you are in a populous city, not in a *lone house*, where a robbery might easily be committed.”

*Grange* is strictly and properly the farm of a monastery, where the religious reposed their corn. *Grangia*, Lat. from *Granum*. But in Lincolnshire, and in other northern counties, they call every lone house, or farm, which stands solitary, a *grange*. WARTON.

So, in T. Heywood's *English Traveller*, 1633:

“Who can blame him to absent himself from home,

“And make his father's house but as a *grange*?”

&c.

And in *Measure for Measure*,

“—at the moated *grange* resides this rejected Mariana.” STEEVENS.

119. You'll have you daughter cover'd with a Barbary horse;] Perhaps an allusion to Jeremiah, v. 8.

\* \* \*

120. —*your nephews neigh to you:*] *Nephew*, in this instance,



instance, has the power of the Latin word *nepos*, and signifies a grandson, or any lineal descendant, however remote. So, in Spencer :

“ And all the sons of these five brethren reign’d

“ By due success, and all their *nephews* late,

“ Even thrice eleven descents the crown obtain’d.”

Sir W. Dugdale very often employs the word in this sense ; and without it, it would not be very easy to shew how *Brabantic* could have *nephews* by the marriage of his *daughter*. Ben Jonson likewise uses it with the same meaning. The alliteration in this passage caused Shakspeare to have recourse to it. STEEVENS.

121. —gennets *for germans.*] A *jennet* is a Spanish horse. STEEVENS.

122. *What profane wretch art thou?*] That is, *what wretch of gross and licentious language?* In that sense Shakspeare often uses the word *profane*.

JOHNSON.

It is so used, in Ben Jonson’s *Tale of a Tub* :

“ By the sly justice, and his clerk *profane*.”

STEEVENS.

124. —*your daughter and the Moor are making the beast with two backs.*] This is an ancient proverbial expression in the French language, whence Shakspeare probably borrowed it ; for in the *Dictionnaire des Proverbes François*, par G. D. B. Bruxelles, 1710, 12mo. I find the following article : “ Faire la Bête à deux Dos,” pour dire faire l’amour. PERCY.

In the *Dictionnaire Comique*, par le Roux, 1750, this phrase is more particularly explained under the article *Bête*.



*Bête.* “*Faire la bête à deux dos.*—Maniere de parler qui signifie etre couché avec une femme ; faire le deduit.—”  
 “Et faisoient tous deux souvent ensemble *la bête à deux dos* joyusement.”—Rabelais, liv. i. There was a translation of Rabelais published in the time of Shakspeare. MALONE.

130. *If't be, &c.*] The lines printed in crotchets are not in the first edition, but in the folio of 1623.

JOHNSON.

132. — *this odd even*—] The *even* of *night* is *midnight*, the time when night is divided into *even* parts.

JOHNSON.

*Odd* is here ambiguously used, as it signifies *strange*, *uncouth*, or *unwonted*; and as it is opposed to *even*.

This expression, however explained, is very harsh; and the poet might have written—At this *odd steven*. *Steven* is an ancient word signifying *time*. So, in the old ballad of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*:

“We may chance to meet with Robin Hood

“Here at some unsett *steven*.” MALONE.

Again, in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, late edition, verse 1526:

“For al day meten men at unset *steven*.”

STEEVENS.

Perhaps midnight is styled the *odd-even* time of night, because it is usually the hour of sleep, which, like death, levels all distinctions, and reduces all mankind, however discriminated, to equality.

So, in *Measure for Measure*:

“—yet *death* we fear,

That makes these *odds* all even. MALONE.



Much pains have been taken by some of the editors, especially by Dr. Warburton, to introduce into the text a parcel of obsolete words which Shakspeare never dreamed of; for the obscurity of his style does not arise from the frequent use of antiquated terms, but from his peculiar manner of applying and combining the words which he found in common use in this day; and when he deviates from the received language of the times, it is rather by coining some harsh and high sounding words of his own, than by looking back for those which had fallen into disuse. If therefore it be necessary to amend this passage, I should choose to read “at this *dull season*,” rather than this *dull steven*, as an expression that would more naturally occur either to Shakspeare or to Roderigo. MONCK MASON.

This ODD EVEN is simply the interval between twelve at night and one in the morning. HENLEY.

140. *That from the sense of all civility——*] That is, *in opposition to*, or *departing from* the sense of all civility. So, in *Twelfth Night*:

“But this is *from* my commission——”

Again, in *The Mayor of Quinborough*, by Middleton, 1661:

“But this is *from* my business.” MALONE.

145. *To an extravagant, &c.*] The old copies read, *In an extravagant, &c.* Mr. Pope made this change, which seems to be necessary.

*Extravagant* is here used in its Latin signification, for *wandering*. Thus in *Hamlet*: “—The *extravagant* and erring spirit.” STEEVENS.



149. For *thus deluding you*.] The first quarto reads,  
For *this delusion*. STEEVENS.

157. To be produc'd] The folio reads, *produced*.  
STEEVENS.

159. —some *check*,] Some rebuke. JOHNSON.

160. —cast *him*:—] That is, *dismiss* him; *reject*  
him. We still say, a *cast* coat, and a *cast* serving-  
man. JOHNSON.

172. And *what's to come of my despised time*,] *De-*  
*spised time*, is *time of no value*; time in which

“There's nothing serious in mortality,

“The wine of life is drawn, and the mere dregs

“Are left this vault to brag of.” JOHNSON.

Again, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

———“expire the term

“Of a *despised* life clos'd in my breast.”

STEEVENS.

176. —*O, thou deceiv'st me*

*Past thought!*—] Thus the quarto, 1622,  
The folio 1623, and the quartos 1630 and 1655,  
read,

*O, she deceives me*

*Past thought!*

I have chosen the apostrophe to his absent daughter  
as the most spirited of the two readings. STEEVENS.

183. *By which the property of youth and maidhood*

*May be abus'd*. —] By which the faculties of a  
young virgin may be infatuated, and made subject to  
illusions and to false imagination: Thus, in *Macbeth*,

“Wicked dreams *abuse*

“The curtain'd sleep.”

JOHNSON.



183: —*and maidhood*—] The quartos read—and  
*manhood*— STEEVENS.

192. *Pray you, lead on.*] The first quarto reads,  
*Pray lead me on.* STEEVENS.

194. —*of might.*] The first quarto reads—*of night.*  
STEEVENS.

197. —*stuff o' the conscience*] This expression to  
common readers appears harsh. *Stuff* of the *conscience*  
is, *substance*, or *essence* of the conscience. *Stuff* is a  
word of great force in the Teutonick language. The  
elements are called in Dutch, *Hoefd stoffen*, or *head*  
*stuffs*. JOHNSON.

Again, in *King Henry VIII.*

“You're full of heavenly stuff,” &c.

Frisch's *German Dictionary* gives this explanation of the  
word *stoff*, “—*materies ex qua aliquid scieri poterit.*”

STEEVENS.

*Stuff o' the conscience* may be explained by the common  
phrase *a matter of conscience*. \* \* \*

208. —*the magnifico*] “The chief men of Venice  
are by a peculiar name called *Magnifici*, i. e. *magnifi-*  
*coes.*” Minshew's *Dictionary*. See too *Volpone*.

TOLLET.

210. *As double as the duke's* :—] *Double* has here its  
natural sense. The president of every deliberative  
assembly has a *double* voice. In our courts, the chief  
justice and one of the inferior judges prevail over the  
other two, because the chief justice has a *double*  
voice.

Brabantio



Brabantio had, *in his effect*, though not by law, yet by *weight and influence*, a voice not *actual and formal*, but *potential* and operative, as *double*, that is, a voice that when a question was suspended, would turn the balance as effectually *as the duke's*. *Potential* is used in the sense of science; a *caustick* is called *potential* fire.

JOHNSON.

I believe here is a mistake. The chief justice, and one of the inferior judges, do *not* prevail over the other two. The lord-mayor in the court of aldermen has a double voice.

TOLLET.

The chief justice has no double voice. If the court is equally divided, nothing is done.

BLACKSTONE.

The *DOUBLE* voice of Brabantio refers to the option, which (as being a *magnifico*, he was no less entitled to, than the duke himself) *EITHER*, of nullifying the marriage of his daughter, contracted without his consent; *OR*, of subjecting Othello to fine and imprisonment, for having seduced an heiress.

HENLEY.

219 —*men of royal siege*;—] Men who have sat upon royal thrones. The quarto has,

———*Men of royal height*.

*Siege* is used for *seat* by other authors. So, in Stowe's *Chronicle*, p. 575: "—there was set up a throne or *siege* royall for the king." See *Comedy of Errors*.

STEEVENS.

219. —*and my demerits*] *Demerits* has the same meaning in our author, and many others of that age, as *merits*: See *Coriolanus*.

STEEVENS.

220. —*speak, unbonneted*,—] *Bonnetter* (says Cotgrave) is to *put off one's cap*. So, in *Coriolanus*:



“Those who are supple and courteous to the people, *bonneted* without any further deed to heave them at all into their estimation.”

*Unbonneted* may therefore signify, *without taking the cap off.* STEEVENS.

223. —*unhoused*—,] Free from *domestick* cares. A thought natural to an adventurer. JOHNSON.

*Unhoused*, as explained by Dr. Johnson, means free from *domestick* cares. But, Othello talking as a soldier, *unhoused* may signify the having no settled house or habitation. WHALLEY.

225. *For the sea's worth.*] The same words occur in Sir W. D'Avenant's *Cruel Brother*, 1630:

“——he would not lose that privilege

“*For the sea's worth.*”

Perhaps the phrase is proverbial.

Pliny the naturalist has a chapter on *the riches of the sea*.

Again, in the *Winter's Tale*:

“—for all the sun sees, or

“The close earth wombs, or the *profound sea*  
*hides*

“In unknown fathoms, &c.”

Again, in *King Henry V.* act i.

“As rich with praise,

“As is the ouse and *bottom of the sea*,

“With sunken wreck, and sumless treasures.”

STEEVENS.

241. —*sequent* messengers] The first quarto reads  
—*frequent* messengers. STEEVENS.



243. —*consuls*,] Hanmer reads, *council*. Theobald would have us read *counsellors*. In *Albion's Triumph*, a masque, 1631, the emperor Albanact is said to be attended by fourteen consuls:—again, *the habits of the consuls were after the same manner*. Geoffery of Monmouth, and Matthew Paris after him, call both dukes and earls, *consuls*. STEEVENS.

246. *The senate hath sent out—*] The early quartos, and all the modern editors, have,

*The senate sent above three several quests.*

The folio,

*The senate hath sent about, &c. that is, about the city.* I have adopted the reading of the folio.

JOHNSON.

*Quests* are, on this occasion, searches. So, in Heywood's *Brazen Age*, 1613:

“Now, if in all his *quests*, he be withheld.”—

STEEVENS.

252. —*a land carrack*;—] A *carrack* is a ship of great bulk, and commonly of great value; perhaps what we now call a *galleon*. JOHNSON.

So, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Coxcomb*:

“——they'll be freighted;

“They're made like *carracks*, all for strength and stowage.” STEEVENS.

The first ships that came richly laden from the West-Indies to Europe were those from the Caraccas, part of the Spanish settlements: and some years ago a Caracca ship generally proved a very rich prize.

MONCK MASON.



256. *To who?*] It is somewhat singular that Cassio should ask this question. See act iii. sc. 3.

“ Did Michael Cassio, when you woo’d my lady,

“ Know of your love?

“ *Oth.* From first to last.

He who was acquainted with the object courted by his friend, could have little reason for doubting to whom he would be married. STEEVENS.

Cassio’s seeming ignorance of Othello’s courtship or marriage might only be affected; in order to keep his friend’s secret, till it became publickly known.

BLACKSTONE.

258. *Have with you.*] This expression denotes readiness. See *Richard III.* act iii. and Johnson’s note. STEEVENS.

260. —*be advis’d*;) That is, be cool; be cautious; be discreet. JOHNSON.

275. *The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,*] *Curled* is elegantly and ostentatiously dressed. He had not the hair particularly in his thoughts. JOHNSON.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakspeare employs the same expression, and evidently alludes to *the hair*:

“ If she first meet the curled Antony,” &c.

Sir W. D’Avenant uses the same expression in his *Just Italian*, 1630:

“ The curl’d and silken nobles of the town.”

Again,

“ Such as the curled youth of Italy.”

I believe Shakspeare has the same meaning in the present instance. STEEVENS.



278. —to fear,] *i. e.* to terrify. See *Comedy of Errors*. STEEVENS.

279. *Judge me the world, &c.*] The lines following in crotchets are not in the first edition. POPE.

281. *Abus'd her delicate youth with drugs, or minerals, That weaken motion:*] Brabantio is here accusing Othello of having used some foul play, and intoxicated Desdemona by drugs and potions to win her over to his love. But why *drugs* to weaken *motion*? How then could she have run away with him voluntarily from her father's house? Had she been averse to choosing Othello, though he had given her medicines that took away the use of her limbs, might she not still have retained her senses, and opposed the marriage? Her father, it is evident, from several of his speeches, is positive, that she must have been *abused* in her *rational* faculties, or she could not have made so preposterous a choice, as to wed with a Moor, a Black, and refuse the finest young gentlemen in Venice. What then have we to do with her *motion* being weakened? If I understand any thing of the poet's meaning here, I cannot but think he must have wrote:

*Abus'd her delicate youth with drugs, or minerals,  
That weaken notion.*

*i. e.* her *apprehension*, right *conception* and *idea* of things, *understanding*, *judgment*, &c. THEOBALD.

Hanmer reads with probability :

*That weaken motion.*

JOHNSON.

*Motion* in a subsequent scene of this play is used in the very sense in which Hanmer would employ it :

“ But



“ But we have reason to cool our raging *motions*, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts.” STEEVENS.

Drugs, or love powders, as they are sometimes called, may operate as inflammers of the blood—may *waken* motion. But I believe no drugs have yet been found out that can fascinate the understanding or affections; that can *weaken* the judgment without entirely subverting it. Opiates, or intoxicating potions may set the senses to sleep, but cannot distort or pervert the intellects, but by destroying them for a time. However, it may be said, that *Brabantio* believed in the efficacy of such drugs, and therefore might, with propriety, talk of their *weakening the understanding*.—The reading proposed by Theobald is, it must be acknowledged, strongly supported by a passage in *King Lear*, act ii.

“ His *notion weakens*, his discernings

“ Are lethargy’d.”

MALONE.

To *weaken notion* is, to *impair the faculties*. It was till very lately, and may with some be still an opinion, that philtres, or love potions, have the power of perverting, and of course, weakening or impairing both the sight and judgment, and of procuring fondness or dotage toward any unworthy object who administers them. And by *motion*, Shakspeare means the senses which are depraved and weakened by these fascinating mixtures.

REMARKS.

In the passages adduced by Mr. Steevens and Mr. Malone, to prove that *motion* signifies *lustful desires*, it may be remarked that the word derives this *peculiar meaning*,



*meaning*, either from some epithet, or restrictive mode of expression, with which it stands connected. But, had it been used *absolutely*, in *that sense*, with what consistency could Brabantio attribute the emotions of lust in his daughter, to the irritation of those very philtres, which he, in the self-same breath, represents as abating it?

The *drugs or minerals*, with which Othello is charged as having *abused the delicate youth* of Desdemona, were supposed to have accomplished his purpose, by

“charming her blood with pleasing heaviness.”  
thereby *weakening* MOTION, that is *subduing her*  
MAIDEN PUDENCY, and *lulling her* WONTED COY-  
NESS *into a state of acquiescence*.

That this is the sense of the passage, is further evident from what follows; for so bashful was she of disposition,

—————that her MOTION

Blush'd at herself:

and, therefore, adds Brabantio:

—————I vouch again,

That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,  
Or with some dram conjur'd to this effect,

He wrought upon her.

HENLEY.

285. For *an abuser*, &c.] The first quarto reads,  
*Such an abuser*, &c. STEEVENS.

290. *You of my inclining*] That is you who are under my command. \* \* \*

301. *To bring—*] The quarto's read—*To bear—*  
STEEVENS.



311. *Bond-slaves, and pagans,—*] Brabantio alludes to the common condition of all blacks, who come from their own country, both *slaves* and *pagans*; and uses the words in contempt of Othello and his complexion. If this Moor is now suffered to escape with impunity, it will be such an encouragement to his black countrymen, that we may expect to see all the first offices of our state filled up by the *pagans* and *bond-slaves* of Africa. STEEVENS.

312. *There is no composition—*] *Composition*, for consistency, concordancy. WARBURTON.

319. *As in these cases where they aim reports,*] These Venetians seem to have had a very odd sort of persons in employment, who did all by hazard, as to *what*, and *how*, they should report; for this is the sense of man's *aiming reports*. The true reading, without question, is,

———*where the aim reports.*

i. e. *where there is no better ground for information than conjecture*: which not only improves the sense, but, by changing the verb into a noun, and the noun into a verb, mends the expression. WARBURTON.

The folio has,

———*the aim reports.*

But, *they aim reports*, has a sense sufficiently easy and commodious. Where men *report* not by certain knowledge, but by *aim* and conjecture. JOHNSON.

To *aim* is to conjecture. So, in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

“But fearing lest my jealous *aim* might err.”



I see no reason for departing from the reading of the old copy

———where the *aim* reports.

*Reports* is, I apprehend, a verb.—In these cases where conjecture or suspicion tells the tale.

*Aim* is again used in this sense, in *Julius Cæsar*:

“What you would work me to, I have some *aim*.”

MALONE.

331. *By Signior Angelo.*] This hemistich is wanting in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

334. *By no assay of reason.*] Bring it to the *test*, examine it by reason, as we examine metals by the *assay*, it will be found counterfeit by all trials.

JOHNSON.

339. —*facile* question—] *Question* is for the *act* of seeking. With more *easy* endeavour. JOHNSON.

*So may he with more facile question bear it,*] That is, he may carry with less dispute—with less opposition. I don't see how the word *question* can signify the *art of seeking*, though the word *quest* may.

MONCK MASON.

340. —*For that it stands not, &c.*] The seven following lines are added since the first edition. POPE.

340. —*warlike* brace,] State of defence. To arm was called to *brace on* the armour. JOHNSON.

346. *To wake and wage, a danger profitless.*] To *wage* here, as in many other places in Shakspeare, signifies to fight, to combat.

Thus, in *King Lear*:

“To *wage* against the enmity of the air.”



It took its rise from the more common expression, to *wage war*. STEEVENS.

352. *Ay so, &c.*] This line is not in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

353. —*they do re-stem*] The quartos mean to read *re-sterne*, though in the first of them the word is misspelt. STEEVENS.

358. *And prays you to believe him.*] The late learned and ingenious Mr. Thomas Clark, of Lincoln's-Inn, read the passage thus :

*And prays you to relieve him.*

But the present reading may stand. *He entreats you not to doubt the truth of this intelligence.* JOHNSON.

362. —*wish him,*] i. e. recommend, desire him.

REED.

370. —*general care.*] The word *general*, when used by Shakspeare as a substantive, always implies the populace, not the publick : and if it were used here as an adjective, without the word *care*, it must refer to *grief* in the following line, a word which may properly denote a private sorrow, but not the alarm which a nation is supposed to feel on the approach of a formidable enemy. MONCK MASON.

371. *Take hold—*] The first quarto reads, *Take any hold—* STEEVENS.

382. *Being not, &c.*] This line is wanting in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

389. *Stood in your action.*] Were the man exposed to your *charge* or *accusation*. JOHNSON.



401. *The very head and front of my offending]* The  
main, the whole, unextenuated. JOHNSON.

403. *And little bless'd with the soft phrase of peace;]*  
—— the set phrase of peace.

*Soft* is the reading of the folio. JOHNSON.

To the set phrase of peace, no reasonable objection  
can be made; yet *soft*, which is found in the folio,  
was, I believe, the author's correction. He uses it  
for *still* and *calm*, as opposed to the clamours of war.  
So, in *Coriolanus*:

“ —— Say to them,

“ Thou art their *soldier*, and being bred in *broils*,

“ Hast not the *soft* way which thou dost confess

“ Were fit for thee to use.” MALONE.

406. *Their dearest action—]* That is *dear*, for which  
much is paid, whether money or labour; *dear action*,  
is action performed at great expence, either of ease or  
safe. JOHNSON.

I should give these words a more natural explana-  
tion, and suppose that they mean their *favourite action*  
——the action most dear to them. MONCK MASON.

411. —*unvarnished—]* The second quarto reads—  
*unravaged—* STEEVENS.

429. *To vouch, &c.]* The first folio unites this  
speech with the preceding one of *Brabantio*; and in-  
stead of *certain* reads *wider*. STEEVENS.

430. —*overt test,]* Open proofs, external evidence.  
JOHNSON.

431. —*thin habits—*

*Of modern seeming—]* Weak shew of slight  
appearance. JOHNSON.



The first quarto reads :

*These are thin habits, and poore likelyhoods  
Of modern seemings you prefer against him.*

STEEVENS.

439. —*the Sagittary,*] Means the sign of the fictitious creatures so called, i. e. an animal compounded of man and horse, and armed with a bow and quiver.

STEEVENS.

442. *The trust, &c.*] This line is wanting in the first quarto.

STEEVENS.

447. —*as truly*] The first quarto reads, as *faithful*.

STEEVENS.

448. *I do confess, &c.*] This line is omitted in the first quarto.

STEEVENS.

459. *Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,  
Of moving accidents, by flood, and field,  
Of hair-breadth scapes in the imminent deadly breach ;]*

“ —Heu ! quibus ille

“ Jactatus fatis ; qua bella exhausta canebat !”

There are some passages in this speech of Othello that remind me of Virgil's description of Dido's growing passion for Æneas.

MONCK MASON.

464. *And portance, &c.*] I have restored,  
*And with it all my travel's history :*

From the old edition. It is in the rest,

*And portance in my travel's history :*

Rymer, in his criticism on this play, has changed it to *portents*, instead of *portance*.

POPE.

Mr. Pope has restored a line to which there is little objection, but which has no force. I believe *portance* was

was



was the author's word in some revised copy. I read thus,

*Of being — sold  
To slavery, of my redemption thence,  
And portance in't; my travel's history.*

My redemption from slavery, and behaviour in it.

JOHNSON.

*Portance*, is a word already used in *Coriolanus*, act ii. line 719.

“The apprehension of his present *portance*.”

465. *Wherein of antres vast, and desarts idle, &c.] Idle* is an epithet used to express the infertility of the chaotick state, in the Saxon translation of the Pentateuch.

JOHNSON.

So, in the *Comedy of Errors*:

“Usurping ivy, briar, or *idle* moss.”] STEEVENS

—*antres*—] *Caves and dens*. JOHNSON.

469. —men whose heads

*Do grow beneath their shoulders.*—] Of these men there is an account in the interpolated travels of Mandeville, a book of that time. JOHNSON.

The *Cannibals* and *Anthropophagi* were known to an English audience before Shakspeare introduced them. In the *History of Orlando Furioso*, play'd for the entertainment of Queen *Elizabeth*, they are mentioned in the very first scene; and Raleigh speaks of people whose heads appear *not above* their shoulders.

Again, in the *Tragedy of Locrine*, 1595:

“Or where the bloody *Anthropophagi*,

“With greedy jaws devour the wand'ring wights.”



The poet might likewise have read of them in Pliny's *Natural History*, translated by P. Holland, 1601, and in Stowe's *Chronicle*. STEEVENS.

470. ————— *These things to hear,*  
 “Iliacosque, iterum demens audire labores,  
 “Exposcit, pendetque iterum narrantis ab ore.”  
 MONCK MASON.

474. —and with a greedy ear  
*Devour up my discourse :*] So, in Marlow's  
*Lust's Dominion :*

“Hang both your *greedy ears* upon my lips ;  
 “Let them *devour my speech*.” MALONE.

480. *But not intently :—*] Thus the eldest quarto.  
 The folio reads, *instinctively*.

The old word, however, may stand. *Intention* and *attention* were once synonymous. So, in a play called *The Isle of Gulls*, 1633 : “Grace ! at sitting down they cannot *intend* it for hunger,” i. e. *attend* to it. Desdemona, who was often called out of the room on the score of house-affairs, could not have heard *Othello's* tale *intently*, i. e. with *attention to all its parts*.

STEEVENS.

*Distinctively* is the reading of the second folio.

MALONE.

503. *Destruction, &c.*] The quartos read, *destruction light on me*. STEEVENS.

511. *You are the lord of duty,*] The first quarto reads,

*You are lord of all my duty.* STEEVENS.



522. *Which, &c.*] This line is omitted in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

527. *Let me speak like yourself:—*] i. e. let me speak as yourself would speak, were you not too much heated with passion. Sir J. REYNOLDS.

528. *—as a grize—*] Grize from *degrees*. A grize is a step. So in *Timon of Athens*:

“ —for every grize of fortune

“ Is smooth'd by that below.”—

In the will of K. Henry VI. where the dimensions of King's College chapel at Cambridge are set down, the word occurs, as spelt in some of the old editions of Shakspeare. “ —From the provost's stall, unto the *greece* called *Gradus Chori*, 90 feet.” STEEVENS.

529. *Into your favour.*] This is wanting in the folio, but found in the quarto. JOHNSON.

530. *When remedies are past, &c.*] According to the old proverb:

“ What can't be cur'd, must be endur'd.”

\* \* \*

533. *New mischief on.*] The quarto's read—*more mischief.*— STEEVENS.

541. *But the free comfort which from thence he hears:]* But the moral precepts of consolation, which are liberally bestowed on occasion of the sentence.

JOHNSON.

546. *That the bruised heart was pierced through the ear.]* Shakspeare was continually changing his first expression for another, either stronger or more uncommon; so that very often the reader, who has not the



the same continuity or succession of ideas, is at a loss for its meaning. Many of Shakspeare's uncouth strained epithets may be explained, by going back to the obvious and simple expression, which is most likely to occur to the mind in that state. I can imagine the first mode of expression that occurred to the poet was this :

The *troubled* heart was never cured by words.  
To give it poetical force, he altered the phrase :

The wounded heart was never reached through the ear.

*Wounded* heart he changed to *broken*, and that to *bruised*, as a more uncommon expression. *Reach* he altered to *touched*, and the transition is then easy to *pierced*, i. e. thoroughly touched. When the sentiment is brought to this state, the commentator, without this unravelling clue, expounds *piercing the heart*, in its common acceptation, *wounding the heart*, which making in this place nonsense, is corrected to *pierced the heart*, which is very stiff, and, as Polonius says, is a vile phrase.

Sir J. REYNOLDS.

*Pierced* may be right. The consequence of a *bruise* is sometimes matter collected, and this can no way be cured without *piercing* or letting it out. Thus, in *Hamlet* :

“ It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,  
“ While rank corruption, mining all within,  
“ Infects unseen.”

Again,

“ This is th' imposthume of much wealth and  
peace,

“ That



“ That inward breaks, and shews no cause without,

“ Why the man dies.” STEEVENS.

*Pierced*, I believe, only means, as Sir Joshua Reynolds supposes, *penetrated, thoroughly affected*. The heart being enclosed by the body, the former could not, in a literal sense, be touched but by *piercing* through the latter. Hence our author's figurative use of the word in this place.

The reading of the old copy may derive some support from Shakspeare's 46th *Sonnet*, where the contested word again occurs :

“ My *heart* doth plead that thou in him doth lie

“ (A closet never *pierc'd* by chrystal eye).”

Again, from *Love's Labour Lost* :

“ Honest plain words best *pierce* the *ear* of grief.”

Again, from *The Merchant of Venice* :

“ With sweetest touches *pierce* your mistress' *ear*.”

The *wounded heart* being reached by counsel, and so healed, through the medium of the *ear*, is just the same kind of conceit, as the *sound heart's* being transfixed by the shaft of love through the medium of the *eye*.

In Marlow's *Tamburlaine*, 1591, *pierced* is used nearly in the same figurative sense :

“ Nor thee nor them, thrice noble Tamburlaine,

“ Shall want my heart to be with gladness  
*pierc'd*.” MALONE.

555. To slubber the gloss, &c.] To *slubber*, on this occasion, is to *obscure*. So, in the First Part of *Jeronimo*, &c. 1605 :

“ The



“The evening too begins to *slubber* day.”

STEEVENS.

558. *The flinty and steel couch of war*] So called from the soldier's being reduced to the necessity of sleeping in iron armour, and on flinty ground.

\* \* \*

559. —*thrice-driven bed of down*—:] A *driven* bed, is a bed for which the feathers are selected, by *driving* with a fan, which separates the light from the heavy.

JOHNSON.

559. —*I do agnize*] *i. e.* acknowledge, confess, avow. So, in the old play of *Cambyzes*:

“The tenor of your princely will, from you for to *agnize*.”

In this instance, however, it signifies to know; as likewise in the following, from the same piece:

“Why so? I pray you let me *agnize*.” STEEVENS.

564. *I crave fit disposition for my wife;*

*Due reference of place, and exhibition, &c.*] I desire, that proper *disposition* be made for my wife, that she may have *precedency* and *revenue*, accommodation and *company*, suitable to her rank.

For *reference* of place, the old quartos have *reverence*, which Hanmer has received. I should read,

*Due preference of place.*—

JOHNSON.

*Exhibition* is allowance. The word is at present used only at the universities.

STEEVENS.

574. —*Most gracious duke,*

*To my unfolding lend a gracious ear* ;] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio, to avoid the repetition of



of the same epithet, reads : “ —your *prosperous* ear ;”  
i. e. your *propitious* ear. STEEVENS.

576. —a charter in your voice] Let your favour  
privilege me. JOHNSON.

577. To assist my simpleness.] The first quarto reads  
this, as an unfinished sentence :

And if my simpleness—— STEEVENS.

582. Even to the very quality of my lord:] The first  
quarto reads,

Even to the *utmost pleasure*, &c. STEEVENS.

*Quality* here may mean *profession*. “ I am so much  
enamoured of Othello, that I am even willing to en-  
dure all the inconveniences incident to a *military life*,  
and to attend him to the wars.” “ I cannot mervayle  
(said lord Essex to Mr. Ashton, a puritan preacher  
who was sent to him in the Tower) though my pro-  
testations are not believed of my enemies, when they  
so little prevaile with a man of your *quality*.”

MALONE.

That *quality* here signifies the *Moorish complexion* of  
Othello, and not his *military profession*, is obvious  
from what immediately follows :

I saw Othello's *visage* in his mind :  
and also from what the Duke says to Brabantio :

If virtue no delighted beauty lack,

Your son-in-law is far more *fair* than *black*.

Desdemona, in this speech asserts, that the virtues  
of Othello had subdued her heart, in spite of his  
visage ; and that, to his rank and accomplishments as  
a soldier,



a soldier, she had consecrated her soul and her fortunes.  
HENLEY.

583. *I saw Othello's visage in his mind:]* It must raise no wonder, that I loved a man of an appearance so little engaging; I saw his face only in his mind; the greatness of his character reconciled me to his form.  
JOHNSON.

591. *Your voices, lords:]* The folio reads, *Let her have your voice.*  
STEEVENS.

593. *Vouch with me—]* Thus the second quarto and the folio.  
STEEVENS.

595. *Nor to comply with heat (the young affects In me defunct) and proper satisfaction;]* As this has been hitherto printed and stopped, it seems to me a period of as stubborn nonsense, as the editors have obtruded upon poor Shakspeare throughout his works. What a preposterous creature is this Othello made, to fall in love with, and marry a fine young lady, when *appetite* and *heat*, and *proper satisfaction*, are *dead* and *defunct* in him! (For, *defunct* signifies nothing else, that I know of, either primitively or metaphorically :) but if we may take Othello's own word in the affair, he was not reduced to this fatal state.

———*or, for I am declin'd*

*Into the vale of years; yet that's not much.*

Again, Why should our poet say (for so he says, as the passage has been pointed) that the young *affect* heat? Youth, certainly, *has* it, and has no occasion or pretence of *affecting* it. And, again, after *defunct*, would he add so absurd a collateral epithet as *proper*?

But



But *affects* was not designed there as a verb, and *defunct* was not designed here at all. I have, by reading *distinct* for *defunct*, rescued the poet's text from absurdity; and this I take to be the tenor of what he would say; "I do not beg her company with me, merely to please myself; nor to indulge the heat and *affects* (*i. e.* affections) of a new-married man, in my own distinct and proper satisfaction; but to comply with her in her request, and desire of accompanying me." *Affects* for *affections* our author in several other passages uses. THEOBALD.

*Nor to comply with heat, the young affects*

*In my defunct and proper satisfaction;]* *i. e.* with that heat and new affections which the indulgence of my appetite has raised and created. This is the meaning of *defunct*, which has made all the difficulty of the passage. WARBURTON.

I do not think that Mr. Theobald's emendation clears the text from embarrassment, though it is with a little imaginary improvement received by Hanmer, who reads thus:

*Nor to comply with heat, affects the young*

*In my distinct and proper satisfaction.*

Dr. Warburton's explanation is not more satisfactory: what made the difficulty will continue to make it. I read,

—————*I beg it not,*

*To please the palate of my appetite,*

*Nor to comply with heat (the young affects*



*In me defunct) and proper satisfaction;  
But to be free and bounteous to her mind.*

*Affects* stands here, not for *love*, but for *passions*, for that by which any thing is affected. *I ask it not*, says he, *to please appetite, or satisfy loose desires*, the passions of youth which I have now outlived, or *for any particular gratification of myself*, but *merely that I may indulge the wishes of my wife*.

Mr. Upton had, before me, changed *my* to *me*; but he has printed young *effects*, not seeming to know that *affects* could be a noun. JOHNSON.

Theobald has observed the impropriety of making Othello confess, that all youthful passions were *defunct* in him; and Hanmer's reading may, I think, be received with only a slight alteration, I would read,

——I beg it not,  
To please the palate of my appetite,  
Nor to comply with heat, *and* young *affects*,  
In my *distinct* and proper satisfaction;  
But to be, &c.

*Affects* stands for *affections*, and is used in that sense by Ben Jonson in *The Case is altered*, 1609:

There is, however, in *The Bondman*, by Massinger, a passage which seems to countenance and explain  
——the young affects in me *defunct*, &c.

“ ——youthful heats,  
“ That look no further than your outward form,  
“ Are long since *buried* in me.”

*Timoleon* is the speaker.

STEEVENS.

I would venture to make the two last lines change places.

I there-



———I therefore beg it not,  
 To please the palate of my appetite,  
 Nor to comply with heat, the young *affects*;  
 But to be free and bounteous to her mind,  
 In my *defunct* and proper satisfaction.

And would then recommend it to consideration, whether the word *defunct* (which would be the only remaining difficulty) is not capable of a signification, drawn from the primitive sense of its Latin original, which would very well agree with the context.

TYRWHITT.

Othello here supposes, that his petition for the attendance of his bride, might be ascribed to one of these two motives:—either solicitude for the enjoyment of an unconsummated and honourable marriage;—or the mere gratification of a sensual and selfish passion. But, as neither was the true one, he abjures them both:

Vouch with me, Heaven, I therefore beg it, NOT  
 To please the palate of my appetite;  
 NOR to comply with heat (—— ———  
 —— ———) and proper satisfaction.

The former, having nothing in it unbecoming, he *simply* disclaims; but the latter, ill according with his season of life (for Othello was now *declin'd into the vale of years*) he assigns a reason for renouncing:

———the young affects,

In me *defunct*.———

As if he had said, “I have *outlived* that *wayward im-*

Dij

*pulse*



*pulse of passion, by which younger men are stimulated : those*

“ ————youthful heats,

“ That look no further than the OUTWARD FORM,

“ Are long since *buried* in me.

The supreme object of my heart is

—to be free and bounteous to her MIND.

By YOUNG *affects*, the poet clearly means those

“ YOUTHFUL *lusts*” [τὰς ΝΕΩΤΕΡΙΚΑΣ ἐπιθυμίας,

*cupiditates rei novæ*, thence JUVENILES, and therefore

EFFRENES *cupiditates*,] which St. Paul admonishes

Timothy to fly from, and the Romans to MORTIFY.

HENLEY.

598. *defend, &c.*] To *defend*, is to forbid. So in Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, late edit. ver. 5641 :

“ Wher can ye seen in any age

“ That highe God *defended* mariage,

“ By expresse word ?”

From *defendre*, Fr.

STEEVENS.

600. FOR *she is with me*] This use of the word FOR, in its primary signification, might have furnished an example in *The Diversions of Purley*. HENLEY.

—when light-wing'd toys

Of feather'd Cupid, seel with wanton dulness

My speculative and offic'd instrument—] Thus

the folio. The quarto reads—

——when light-wing'd toys

And feather'd Cupid foils with wanton dulness

My speculative and *active* instruments—

All



All these words (in either copy) mean no more than this: *When the pleasures and idle toys of love make me unfit either for seeing the duties of my office, or for the ready performance of them, &c.* STEEVENS.

606. —my estimation!] Thus the folio; the quarto —reputation. STEEVENS.

625. *If virtue no delighted beauty lack,*] This is a senseless epithet. We should read *belighted beauty*, i. e. white and fair. WARBURTON.

Hanmer reads, more plausibly, *delighting*. I do not know that *belighted* has any authority. I should rather read,

*If virtue no delight or beauty lack.*

*Delight*, for *delectation*, or *power of pleasing*, as it is frequently used. JOHNSON.

There is no such word as—*belighted*. The plain meaning, I believe, is, if virtue comprehends every thing in itself, then your virtuous son-in-law of course is beautiful: he has that beauty which delights every one. *Delighted*, for *delighting*; Shakspeare often uses the active and passive participles indiscriminately. Of this practice I have already given many instances. The same sentiment seems to occur in the *Twelfth Night*:

“In nature is no blemish, but the mind;

“None can be call’d deform’d, but the unkind:

“*Virtue is beauty.*”—— STEEVENS.

*Delighted* is used by Shakspeare in the sense of *delighting*, or *delightful*. See *Cymbeline*, act v:

D i i j

“Whom



“ Whom best I love I cross, to make my gift,  
 “ The more delay’d, *delighted*.” TYRWHITT.

628. —*have a quick eye to see*] Thus the eldest quarto. The folio reads,

———*if thou hast eyes to see.* STEEVENS.

633. —*best advantage.*—] Fairest opportunity.  
 JOHNSON.

651. —*a Guinea-hen,*—] A showy bird with fine feathers.  
 JOHNSON.

A *Guinea-hen* was anciently the cant term for a prostitute.  
 STEEVENS.

663. *If the balance*] The folio reads—*If the brain.*  
 STEEVENS.

*Beam*, which Mr. Theobald suggested, was probably our author’s word, on a revision of his play.

MALONE.

669. —*a sect or scyon.*] Thus the folio and quarto. A *sect* is what the more modern gardeners call a *cutting*. The modern editors read—a *set*. STEEVENS.

677. Defeat *thy* favour *with an* usurped beard:] *Favour* here means that combination of features which gives the face its distinguishing character. *Defeat*, from *defaire*, in French, signifies to unmake, decompose, or give a different appearance to, either by taking away something, or adding. Thus, in *Don Quixotte*, Cardenio *defeated* his *favour* by cutting off his beard, and the Barber his, by putting one on. The beard which Mr. Ashton *usurped*, when he escaped from the Tower, gave so different an appearance to his face, that he passed through his guards without



without the least suspicion. In the *Winter's Tale*, Autolycus had recourse to an expedient like Cardenio's (as appears from the *pocketing up his pedlar's excrement*) to prevent his being known in the garb of the prince.

HENLEY.

681. —*it was a violent commencement in her, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration.*—] There seems to be an opposition of terms here intended, which has been lost in transcription. We may read, *it was a violent conjunction, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration*; or, what seems to me preferable, *it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequel.*

JOHNSON.

I believe the poet uses *sequestration* for *sequel*. He might conclude that it was immediately derived from *sequor*. *Sequestration*, however, may mean no more than *separation*. So, in this play—"a *sequester* from liberty."

STEEVENS.

686. —*as luscious as locusts*—] Whether you understand by this the insect or the fruit, it cannot be given as an instance of a delicious morsel, notwithstanding the exaggerations of lying travellers. The true reading is *lohocks*, a very pleasant confection introduced into medicine by the Arabian physicians; and so very fitly opposed both to the bitterness and use of *coloquintida*.

WARBURTON.

The censure of the learned Bishop upon travellers is here certainly misplaced; nor is he more fortunate in his proposed emendation. That viscous substance which the pod of the locust contains, is, perhaps, of  
all



all others the most *luscious*. From its likeness to honey, in consistency and flavour, the *locust* is called the *honey-tree* also. Its seeds, enclosed in a long pod, lie bedded in the juice.

HENLEY.

687. —bitter *as coloquintida*.] The old quarto reads—as *acerb* as *coloquintida*.

STEEVENS.

694. —*betwixt an erring Barbarian*——] We should read *errant*; that is, a vagabond, one who has no house nor country.

WARBURTON.

Hanmer reads, *arrant*. *Erring* is as well as either.

JOHNSON.

So, in *Hamlet*:

“Th’ extravagant and *erring* spirit hies

“To his confine.”

STEEVENS.

An *erring Barbarian*; perhaps meaning a *rover* from *Barbary*. He had before said, “You’ll have your daughter covered with a *Barbary* horse.”

MALONE.

The word *erring* is sufficiently explained by a passage in the first scene of the play, where Roderigo tells Brabantio that his daughter was

Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortune,

To an extravagant and wheeling stranger.

*Erring* is the same as *erraticus* in Latin.

The word *erring* is used in the same sense in some of Orlando’s verses in *As You Like It*:

“Tongues I’ll hang on ev’ry tree,

“That shall civil sayings shew;

“Some, how brief the life of man

“Runs his *erring* pilgrimage.”

MONCK MASON.



700. —*If I depend on the issue?*] These words are wanting in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

705. —*conjunctive.*] The first quarto reads, *communicative.* STEEVENS.

715. *What say you?*] This speech is omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

717. *I am chang'd.*] This is omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

718. *Go to; farewell: put money enough in your purse.*] The folio omits this line. STEEVENS.

729. —*to plume up, &c.*] The first quarto reads —*to make up, &c.* STEEVENS.

735. *The Moor is of a free and open nature,*] The first quarto reads,

The Moor, a free and open nature too,

That thinks, &c. STEEVENS.

## ACT II.

Line 8. —*WHEN mountains melt on them,*] Thus the folio. The quarto reads,

“—when the huge mountain melts.”

This latter reading might be countenanced by the following passage in the Second Part of *King Henry IV.*

“————the



“ ———the continent,

“ Weary of solid firmness, *melt* itself

“ Into the sea.” ———

STEEVENS.

The quarto is surely the better reading; it conveys a more natural image, more poetically expressed. Every man who has been on board a vessel in the Bay of Biscay, or in any very high sea, must know that the vast billows seem to melt away from the ship, not on it.

MONCK MASON.

11. —*the foaming shore.*] The elder quarto reads —*banning* shore, which offers the bolder image; *i. e.* the shore that execrates the ravage of the waves. So, in *King Henry VI.* P. I.

“ Fell, *banning* hag, enchantress hold thy tongue,”

STEEVENS.

15. *And quench the guards of the ever-fixed pole:]*  
Alluding to the star *Arctophylax*.

JOHNSON.

The elder quarto reads—*ever-fir'd* pole.

STEEVENS.

27. *The ship is here put in,*

*A Veronese: Michael Cassio, &c.]* The author of *The Revisal* is of opinion, that the poet intended to inform us, that Othello's lieutenant, Cassio, was of Verona, an inland city of the Venetian state; and adds, that the editors have not been pleased to say what kind of ship is here denoted by a *Veronessa*. By a *Veronessa* or *Veronesè* (for the Italian pronunciation must be retained, otherwise the measure will be defective) a ship of Verona is denoted; as we say to  
this



this day of ships in the river, such a one is a *Dutchman*, a *Jamaica-man*, &c. STEEVENS.

*Veronessa*, a ship of Verona. But the true reading is *Veronese*, pronounced as a quadrisyllable.

——The ship is here put in,

A *Veronese*.——

It was common to introduce *Italian* words, and in their proper pronounciation then familiar. See Spenser in the *Faerie Queen*, b. iii. c. xiii. 10.

“With sleeves dependent *Albanesè wise*.”

The poet had not a ship in his thoughts.—He intended to inform us, that Othello’s lieutenant, Cassio, was *of Verona*. We should certainly read,

“The ship is here put in.

“A *Veronese*, Michael *Cassio*, (&c.)

“Is come on shore.”——

This regulation of the lines is ingenious. But I agree with Hanmer, and I think it appears from many parts of the play, that Cassio was a Florentine. In this speech, the *third gentleman*, who brings the news of the wreck of the Turkish fleet, returns his tale, and relates the circumstances more distinctly. In his *former* speech he says, “A noble ship of *Venice* saw the distress of the Turks.” And here he adds, “The very ship is just now put into our port, and she is a *Veronese*.” That is, a ship fitted out or furnished by the people of Verona, a city of the Venetian state.

WARTON.

I believe we are all wrong. *Verona* is an inland city. Every inconsistency may, however, be avoided,



ed, if we read *The Veronessa*, i. e. the *name* of the ship is the *Veronessa*. Verona, however, might be obliged to furnish ships towards the general defence of Italy. STEEVENS.

The emendation proposed by Mr. Steevens is acute, but Shakspeare's acquaintance with the topography of Italy (as appears from the *Tempest*) was very imperfect. Had any one objected to him against the reading in the text, that Verona was not a maritime city, he would probably have replied, as did Corporal Trim, in respect to Bohemia—"but it might have happened otherwise, if it had pleased God."

HENLEY.

42. *Even till we make the main, &c.*] This line and half is wanting in the eldest quarto. STEEVENS.

47. —warlike *isle*,] Thus the folio. The first quarto reads—*worthy isle*. STEEVENS.

52. *His bark is stoutly timber'd,——*  
*Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,*  
*Stand in bold cure.*] I do not understand these lines. I know not how *hope* can be *surfeited to death*, that is, *can be increased, till it is destroyed*; nor what it is to *stand in bold cure*; or why *hope* should be considered as a disease. In the copies there is no variation. Shall we read,

*Therefore my fears, not surfeited to death,*  
*Stand in bold cure?*

This is better, but it is not well. Shall we strike a bolder stroke, and read thus:

*Therefore*



*Therefore my hopes, not forfeited to death,  
Stand bold, not sure.*

JOHNSON.

*Therefore my hopes not surfeited to death,*

*Stand in bold cure.]* Presumptuous hopes, which have no foundation in probability, may be said to surfeit themselves to death, or forward their own dissolution. To *stand in bold cure*, is to erect themselves in confidence of being fulfilled. A parallel expression occurs in *K. Lear*, act iii.

“This rest might yet have balm’d his broken  
senses,

“Which, if conveniency will not allow,

“*Stand in hard cure.*”

Again,

—his life, with thine, &c.

*Stand in assured loss.*

*In bold cure* means, in confidence of being cured.

STEEVENS.

A surfeit being a sickness arising from an *excessive* over-charge of the stomach, the author, with his usual licence, uses it for any species of *excess*.—The meaning, I think, is—*Therefore my hopes, not being destroyed by their own excess, but being reasonable and moderate, are like to be fulfilled.*

Or rather,

—*Therefore my hopes of his safety, which indeed are faint and weak, but not entirely destroyed by excess of despondency, may chance to be fulfilled.*

The word *surfeit* having occurred to Shakspeare, led him to consider such a hope as Cassio entertained (not

E

a sanguine,



a sanguine, but a faint and languid, hope—“*sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought*”), as a *disease*, and to talk of its *cure*. A passage in *Twelfth Night*, &c. where a similar phraseology is used, may serve to strengthen this interpretation, while at the same time it shews that there is here no corruption in the text:

“Give me *excess* of it ; that *surfeiting*,  
“The appetite may *sicken*, and so *die*.”

MALONE.

I believe that Solomon, upon this occasion, will be found the best interpreter.—“*Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.*”

HENLEY.

53. *Of very expert and approv’d allowance ;*] I read,  
*Very expert, and of approv’d allowance.* JOHNSON.

*Expert and approv’d allowance* is put for *allow’d and approv’d expertness*. This mode of expression is not unfrequent in Shakspeare.

STEEVENS.

70. *And in the essential vesture of creation,*

*Does bear all excellency*——] Such is the reading of the quartos ; for which the folio has this :

*And in the essential vesture of creation*

*Do’s tyre the ingeniuer.*

Which I explain thus,

*Does tire the ingenious verse.*

This is the best reading, and that which the author substituted in his revisal.

JOHNSON.

The reading of the quarto is so flat and unpoetical, when compared with that sense which seems meant to have been given in the folio, that I heartily wish some emendation could be hit on, which might entitle it to  
a place



a place in the text. I believe the word *tire* was not introduced to signify—to *fatigue*, but to *attire*, to *dress*. The verb *to attire*, is often so abbreviated.

*The essential vesture of creation* tempts me to believe it was so used on the present occasion. I would read something like this :

*And in the essential vesture of creation*

*Does tire the ingenuous virtue.*

i. e. invests her artless virtue in the fairest form of earthly substance. See *Merchant of Venice*, act v.

It may, however, be observed, that the word *ingen* did not anciently signify *one who manages the engines or artillery of an army*, but any *ingenious person*, any *master of liberal science*.

So, in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*, act i. sc. 1.

“No, Silius, we are no good *ingeners*,

“We want the fine arts,” &c.

*Ingener*, therefore, may be the true reading of this passage : and a similar thought occurs in the *Tempest*, act iv. sc. 1.

“For thou shalt find she will outstrip all praise,

“And make it *halt* behind her.”

In the argument of *Sejanus*, Jonson likewise says, that his hero “worketh with all his *ingene*,” apparently from the Latin *ingenium*. STEEVENS.

Perhaps the poet wrote :

Does tire the *ingene* ever.

This is very near the word exhibited by the folio.

MALONE.

Eij

The



The reading of the folio, though incorrectly spelled, appears to have been,

Does *tire* the *engineer*;

which is preferable to either of the proposed amendments; and the meaning of the passage would then be, “One whose real perfections were so excellent, that to blazon them would exceed the abilities of the ablest masters.”

The sense attributed to the word *tire*, according to this reading, is perfectly agreeable to the language of poetry. The objection to the reading of *ingener*, is, that although we find the words *engine*, *inginer*, and *ingenious* in Jonson, they are not the language of Shakspeare; and I believe, indeed, that Jonson is singular in the use of them. MONCK MASON.

Does *tire* the *ingenieur*.] Whoever shall reject uncommon expressions in the writings of Shakspeare, because they differ either from the exact rules of orthography, or from the unsettled mode of spelling them by other writers, will be found to deprive him no less of his beauties, than that ornithologist would the peacock, who should cut out every eye of his train because it was either not circular, or else varied from some imaginary standard.—*Ingenieur* is no doubt of the same import with *ingener* or *ingeneer*, though perhaps differently written by Shakspeare in reference to *ingenious*, and to distinguish it from *ingeneer*, which he has elsewhere used in a *military* sense. Mr. M. Mason's objection, that it is not the language of Shakspeare, is more than begging



begging the question; and to affirm that Jonson is singular in the use of *ingine*, *inginer*, and *inginous*, is as little to the purpose. For we not only have those expressions in other writers, but others from the same root, as *ingene*, *engene*, &c. in Holinshed, and Sir T. Moore; and Daniel uses *ingeniate*:

Th' adulterate beauty of a falsed cheek  
Did Nature (for this good) *ingeniate*,  
To shew in thee the glory of her best:

HENLEY:

76. *Traitors ensteep'd*——] Thus the folio and one of the quartos. The first copy reads—*enscerped*, of which every reader may make what he pleases. Perhaps *enscerped* was an old English word borrowed from the French *escarpe*, which Shakspeare, not finding congruous to the image of clogging the keel, afterwards changed.

STEEVENS.

*The gutter'd rocks, &c.*

*Traitors ensteep'd to clog the guiltless keel,*] A similar idea occurs in one of Gay's ballads:

How can they say that Nature

Has nothing made in vain!

Why then beneath the water

Do hideous rocks remain?

No eyes those rocks discover,

That lurk beneath the deep,

To wreck the wandering lover,

And leave the maid to weep.

Mr. Steevens's difficulty respecting *ensteep'd*, would, perhaps, have been removed, if he had but recollected—



ed the passage of the fourth act, where Othello alludes to the fate of Tantalus.

Had it pleas'd Heaven  
To try me with affliction ; had he rain'd  
All kind of sores, and shames on my bare head ;  
*Steep'd* me in poverty to the very lips. —

HENLEY.

77. *Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,*  
*As having SENSE of beauty, do omit*  
*Their mortal natures, letting go safely by*  
*The DIVINE Desdemona.]* How much is this  
in the spirit of Lucretius, when he thus apostrophises  
Venus :

*Te, Dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila cæli,*  
*Adventumque tuum ;*————

—————*tibi rident æquora ponti,*

*Placatumque nitet diffuso lumine cælum.* HENLEY.

87. *Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms,]*  
Thus the folio. The quarto with less animation :  
*And swiftly come to Desdemona's arms.*

STEEVENS.

89. *And bring all Cyprus comfort !]* This passage is  
only found in the quartos. STEEVENS.

105. *See for the news.]* The first quarto reads, *So*  
*speaks this voice.* STEEVENS.

114. *In faith, too much ;]* Thus the folio. The  
first quarto thus :

*I know too much ;*

*I find it, I ; for when, &c.*

STEEVENS.

122. *Saints in your injuries, &c.]* When you have  
a mind



a mind to do injuries, you put on an air of sanctity.

JOHNSON.

124. *O, fie upon thee, slanderer !]* This short speech is, in the quarto, unappropriated; and may as well belong to *Æmilia* as to *Desdemona*. STEEVENS.

131. —critical.] That is, censorious. JOHNSON.

145. —her blackness fit.] The first quarto reads *hit*. STEEVENS.

148. *She never yet was foolish, &c.]* The law makes the power of cohabitation a proof that a man is not a *natural*; therefore, since the foolishhest woman, if *pretty*, may have a child, no *pretty* woman is ever foolish. JOHNSON.

156. *But what praise couldst thou bestow on a deserving woman indeed ?]* The hint for this question, and the metrical reply of Iago is taken from a strange pamphlet, called *Choice, Chance, and Change, or Conceits in their Colours*, 1606; when after *Tidero* has described many ridiculous characters in verse, *Arnofilo* asks him, “But, I pray thee, didst thou write none in commendation of some worthy creature?” *Tidero* then proceeds like Iago to repeat more verses.

STEEVENS.

158. —put on the vouch.] To *put on* is to *provoke*, to *incite*. So in *Macbeth*:

“——the powers above

“*Put on* their instruments.” STEEVENS.

167. *To change the cod’s head for the salmon’s tail ;]* i. e. to exchange a delicacy for coarser fare.

STEEVENS.



169. *See suitors following, and not look behind;*] The first quarto omits this line. STEEVENS.

172. *To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer.*] After enumerating the perfections of a woman, Iago adds, that if ever there was such a one as he had been describing, she was at the best, of no other use, than *to suckle children, and keep the accounts of a household*. The expressions *to suckle fools, and chronicle small beer*, are only instances of the want of natural affection, and the predominance of a critical censoriousness in Iago, which he allows himself to be possessed of, where he says, *O! I am nothing, if not critical*. STEEVENS.

175. —*profane*—] Gross of language, of expression broad and brutal. So Brabantio, in the first act, calls Iago *profane* wretch. JOHNSON.

Ben Jonson, in describing the characters in *Every Man out of his Humour*, styles Carlo Buffone, a publick, scurrilous, and *profane* jester. STEEVENS.

176. —*liberal counsellor?*] *Liberal* for *licentious*.

WARBURTON.

*How say you, Cassio, is he not a most profane and liberal counsellor?*] But in what respect was Iago a counsellor? He caps sentences, indeed: but they are not by way of *advice*, but *description*: what he says, is, reflections on character and conduct in life. For this reason, I am very apt to think, our author wrote *censurer*. THEOBALD.

*Counsellor* seems to mean, not so much a man that gives counsel, as one that discourses fearlessly and volubly. A talker. JOHNSON.

*Counsellor*



*Counsellor* is here used in the common acceptation. Desdemona refers to the answers she had received from Iago, and particularly her last. HENLEY.

182. —*I will gyve thee—*] *i. e.* catch, shackle.

POPE.

The first quarto reads, “I will *catch* you in your own *courtesies*;” the second quarto, “I will *catch* you in your own courtship.” The folio as it is in the text.

STEEVENS.

186. *To play the sir in.*] That is—to shew your good breeding and gallantry. HENLEY.

187. —*well kiss’d and excellent courtesy;—*] This I think should be printed, *well kiss’d! an excellent courtesy!* Spoken when Cassio kisses his hand, and Desdemona courtesies. JOHNSON.

The old quarto confirms Dr. Johnson’s emendation.

STEEVENS.

198. —*calmness,*] The folio reads *calmes*.

MALONE.

202. —*If it were now to die,*

*’Twere now to be most happy.*] So Cherea, in *The Eunuch of Terence*, act iii. sc. 5.

“Proh, Jupiter!

“Nunc tempus profecto est, cum perpeti me possum interfeci,

“Ne vitâ aliquâ hoc gaudium contaminet ægritudine.” MALONE.

213. *And this, and this, &c. Kissing her.*] So, in Marlow’s *Lust’s Dominion*:

“I pr’ythee



“ I pr’ythee chide if I have done amiss,  
 “ But let my punishment be *this—and this.*”

“ [*Kissing the Moor.*”

MALONE.

Marlow’s play was written before that of Shakspeare, who might possibly have acted in it. STEEVENS.

219. *News, friends;*] The modern editors read (after Mr. Rowe) *Now, friends.* I would observe once for all, that (in numberless instances in this play, as well as in others) where my predecessors had silently and without reason made alterations, I have as silently restored the old readings. STEEVENS.

223. *I prattle out of fashion.—*] Out of method, without any settled order of discourse. JOHNSON.

226. *—the master—*] The pilot of the ship.

JOHNSON.

234. *—the court of guard—*] *i. e.* the place where the guard musters. STEEVENS.

238. *Lay thy finger thus—*] On thy mouth, to stop it while thou art listening to a wiser man. JOHNSON.

241. *And will she love him still for prating?*] The folio reads—*To love him still for prating.* STEEVENS.

244. *When the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there should be a game to inflame it, and to give satiety a fresh appetite; loveliness in favour, sympathy in years, manners, and beauties;—*] This, it is true, is the reading of the generality of the copies: but, methinks, it is a very peculiar experiment, when the blood and spirits are dulled and exhausted with sport, to raise and recruit them by sport: for *sport* and *game* are but  
 two



two words for the same thing. I have retrieved the pointing and reading of the elder quarto, which certainly gives us the poet's sense; that when the blood is dulled with the exercise of pleasure, there should be proper incentives on each side to raise it *again*, as the charms of beauty, equality of years, and agreement of manners and disposition; which are wanting in Othello to rekindle Desdemona's passion.

THEOBALD.

245. —*again to inflame it,*] Thus the quarto 1622. It is the folio reads—*a game*. STEEVENS.

265. —*green minds*—] Minds unripe, minds not yet fully formed. JOHNSON.

269. —*condition*.] Qualities, disposition of mind.

JOHNSON.

276. —*an index and obscure prologue, &c.*] That indexes were formerly *prefixed* to books, appears from a passage in *Troilus and Cressida*. MALONE.

287. —*tainting*—] Throwing a slur upon his discipline. JOHNSON.

288. —*other course*—] The first quarto reads, *cause*. STEEVENS.

291. —*sudden in choler*;—] *Sudden*, is precipitately violent. JOHNSON.

295. —*whose qualification shall come, &c.*] Whose resentment shall not be so *qualified* or *tempered*, as to be *well tasted*, as not to retain some *bitterness*. The phrase is harsh, at least to our ears. JOHNSON.

Perhaps *qualification* means *fitness to preserve good order*, or *the regularity of military discipline*.

STEEVENS.



317. —*like a poisonous mineral*—] This is philosophical. Mineral poisons kill by corrosion.

JOHNSON.

319. 'Till I am even with him,] Thus the quarto, 1622; the first folio reads:

'Till I am *even'd* with him.

*i. e.* 'Till I am on a level with him by retaliation.

STEEVENS.

323. *If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trace*

*For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,]*

Dr. Warburton, with his usual happy sagacity, turned the old reading *trash* into *brach*. But it seems to me, that *trash* belongs to another part of the line, and that we should read *trash* for *trace*. The old quartos (in the same part of the line) read *crush*, signifying indeed the same as *trash*, but plainly corrupted from it. To *trash* a hound is a term of hunting still used in the North, and perhaps not uncommon in other parts of England. It is, to correct, to *rate*. *Crush* was never the *technical* expression on this occasion; and only found a place here as a more familiar word with the Printers. The sense is, “If this hound Roderigo, whom I *rate* for quick hunting, for over-running the scent, will but *stand the putting on*, will but have patience to be fairly and properly put upon the scent, &c.” This very hunting term to *trash*, is metaphorically applied by our author in *The Tempest*, act i. sc. 2.

“Being once perfected how to grant suits,

“How to deny them, whom to advance, and whom

“To *trash* for overtopping.

To



*To trash for overtopping*, i. e. “What suitors to check for their too great forwardness.” Here another phrase of the field is joined with *to trash*. To *overtop* is when a hound gives his tongue above the rest, too loudly or too readily; for which he ought to be *trash’d* or rated. *Topper*, in the good sense of the word, is a common name for a hound. Shakspeare is fond of allusions to hunting, and appears to be well acquainted with its language. This explication of *trash* illustrates a passage in the *Bonduca* of Beaumont and Fletcher, which has been hitherto misunderstood and misrepresented; and where the use of the word equally reflects light on our author. Act i. sc. 1.

“Car. I fled too,

“But not so fast: your jewel had been lost then,

“Young *Hengo* there; he *trash’d* me.”

Here *Bonduca* and *Nennius* are accusing *Caratach* of running away from the Romans. *Caratach* answers, “It is very true, *Nennius*, that I fled from the Romans.—But recollect, I did not run so fast as you pretend: I soon stood still to defend your favourite youth *Hengo*:—He STOPPED my flight, and I saved his life.” In this passage, where *trash* properly signifies *check*, the commentators substitute *trace*: a correction, which entirely destroys the force of the context, and the spirit of the reply. WARTON.

To *trash* likewise signifies to *follow*. So, in the *Puritan*, 1605: “A guarded lackey to run before it, and py’d liveries to come *trashing* after it.” The repetition of the word *trash* is much in Shakspeare’s manner,



manner, though in his worst. In a subsequent scene, Iago calls Bianca—*trash*. STEEVENS.

325. *I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip ;*] A phrase from the art of wrestling. JOHNSON.

326. *Rank garb*] I believe, means, *grossly*, i. e. *without mincing the matter*. So, in Marston's *Dutch Courtezan*, 1604:

“Whither, in the *rank* name of madness, whither?”

STEEVENS.

332. *Knavery's plain face is never seen—*] An honest man acts upon a plan, and forecasts his designs ; but a knave depends upon temporary and local opportunities, and never knows his own purpose, but at the time of execution. JOHNSON.

335. —*mere perdition—*] *Mere* in this place signifies *entire*. See *Henry VIII.* act iii. line 598, &c.

STEEVENS.

338. —*his addiction*] The first quarto reads, *his mind*. STEEVENS.

359. *Our general cast us—*] That is, *appointed us to our stations*. To *cast the play*, is, in the style of the theatres, to assign to every actor his proper part.

JOHNSON.

Perhaps *cast us*, only means *dismissed us*, or *got rid of our company*. So, in one of the following scenes, “You are but now *cast* in his mood ;” i. e. *turn'd out of your office in his anger* ; and in the first scene it means to *dismiss*. STEEVENS.

370. —*an alarum—*] The voice may sound an *alarum* more properly than the eye can sound a *parley*.

JOHNSON.

The



The eye is often said to *speak*. Thus we frequently hear of the *language* of the *eye*. Surely that which can *talk* may, without any violent stretch of the figure, be allowed to *sound a parley*. The folio reads *parley to provocation*. REMARKS.

370. —*is it not an alarum to love?*—] The quartos read—'*tis an alarm to love*. STEEVENS.

384. —*craftily qualified*—] Slily mixed with water. JOHNSON.

399. *Three lads of Cyprus,*] The folio reads—*Three else of Cyprus*. STEEVENS.

401. *The very elements*—] As quarrelsome as the *discordia semina rerum*; as quick in opposition as fire and water. JOHNSON.

406. *If consequence do but approve my dream,*] Every scheme subsisting only in the imagination may be termed a *dream*. JOHNSON.

408. —*given me a rouse, &c.*] A *rouse* appears to be a quantity of liquor rather too large.

So in *Hamlet*, and in *The Christian turn'd Turk*, 1612:

“—our friends may tell

“We drank a *rouse* to them.” STEEVENS.

416. *A life's but a span*;) Thus the quarto. The folio reads:

“*Oh, man's life's but a span.*” STEEVENS.

424. —*so exquisite*—] The quarto reads, *so expert*. STEEVENS.

434. *King Stephen, &c.*] These stanzas are taken from an old song, which the reader will find recovered and preserved in a curious work, entitled, *Relicks*



of *Ancient Poetry*, consisting of old heroick ballads, songs, &c. 3 vols. 12mo. JOHNSON.

So, in Greene's *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*: “*King Stephen* wore a pair of cloth breeches of a noble a pair, and thought them passing costly.” STEEVENS.

437. —*lown*.] Sorry fellow, paltry wretch.

JOHNSON.

476. *He'll watch the horologe a double set*,] If he have no drink, he'll keep awake while the clock strikes two rounds, or four-and-twenty hours.

Chaucer uses the word *horologe* in more places than one.

“Well sikerer was his crowing in his loge

“Than is a clock or abbey *horologe*.” JOHNSON.

487. —*ingraft infirmity*:] An infirmity rooted, settled in his constitution. JOHNSON.

Dr. Johnson's explanation seems to fall short of the poet's meaning. The qualities of a tree are so changed by grafting, that its fruit loses the properties of the original stock, and assumes those of the graft in their stead. Conformably to this idea, is the assertion of Hamlet concerning the same vice in his countrymen:

“They clepe us drunkards, &c.” HENLEY.

496. —*into a twiggen bottle*.] A twiggen bottle is a wicker'd bottle; and so the quarto reads.

STEEVENS.

509. —*Diablo*—] I meet with this exclamation in Marlow's *King Edward II.* 1622: “*Diablo?* what passions call you these?” STEEVENS.



513. —*I am hurt to death*—he dies.] *Montano* thinks he is mortally wounded, yet by these words he seems determined to continue the duel, and to kill his antagonist *Cassio*. So when *Roderigo* runs at *Cassio*, in the 5th act, he says—“Villain, thou dy’st.” TOLLET.

*He dies*, i. e. he shall die. He may be supposed to say this as he is offering to renew the fight.

STEEVENS.

The first quarto reads—

’*Zounds*, I bleed still ; I am hurt to death.

And adds in the margin—*he faints*. This shews that the words—*he dies*—were at first ignorantly inserted by the editors of the folio (where alone they are found) who were misled by *Cassio*’s saying that he was “hurt to death ;” and afterwards thinking it necessary to omit the oath that originally stood in this line, they absurdly supplied its place, by introducing this improper marginal direction into the text. MALONE.

516. —*all sense of place and duty?*] So Hanmer. The rest,

——*all place of sense and duty?* JOHNSON.

522. —*to carve forth his own rage*,] So the quarto. The reading of the folio—*for his own rage*, is perhaps better. MALONE.

524. ——*it frights the isle*  
*From her propriety*.]—From her regular and proper state. JOHNSON.

529. *In quarter*—] In their quarters ; at their lodging. JOHNSON.

Rather at peace, quiet. They had been on that very



spot (the court or platform, it is presumed, before the castle) ever since Othello left them, which can scarcely be called being *in their quarters*, or *at their lodging*. REMARKS.

It required one example, if no more, to evince that *in quarter* ever signified *quiet, at peace*.—Perhaps the tomohawk of criticism has never been thrown with more desperate dexterity than by this very Remarker, whose oscitancy in this instance exposes him to a severe retaliation. But little attention would have shewn, that the *them*, whom he speaks of Othello's having left, was *only* Cassio; who, being joined by Iago, where Othello (but not on the *platform*) had just left him, is dissuaded from setting the watch immediately; entreated to partake of a stoop of wine, in company with a brace of Cyprus gallants, then waiting without; and prevailed upon, though reluctantly, to invite them in. In this apartment the carousal happens, and wine is repeatedly called for, till at last Cassio, finding its too powerful effects, goes out to set the watch. At the proposal of Montano, himself and Iago follow Cassio towards the platform, and the latter sets on Roderigo to insult him. The scuffle ensues; an alarm is given, and Othello comes forth to inquire the cause. When, therefore, Iago answers:

I do not know:—friends all but now, even now

In *quarter*—

it is evident the *quarter* referred to, was *that apartment of the castle assigned to the officers on guard*, where Othello, after giving Cassio his orders, had, a little before,



before, left him; and where Iago, with his companions, immediately found him. HENLEY.

537. —*you are thus forgot?*] i. e. you have thus forgot yourself. STEEVENS.

543. *That you unlace—*] Slacken, or loosen. Put in danger of dropping; or perhaps strip of its ornaments. JOHNSON.

Dr. Johnson gives no reason for this interpretation. I believe that *unlace* in this passage means—“You UNLESS OR ONLES your reputation,” from the verb *Ouleran*. HORNE TOOKE.

544. —*spend your rich opinion—*] Throw away and squander a reputation so valuable as yours. JOHNSON.

551. —*self charity—*] Care of one's self.

JOHNSON.

556. *And passion, having my best judgment collied,*] Thus the folio reads, and I believe rightly. Othello means, that passion has discoloured his judgment. The word is used in *The Midsummer-Night's Dream*:

“—like lightning in the *collied* night.”

To *colly* anciently signified to *besmut*, to *blacken as with coal*. So, in a comedy called *The Family of Love*, 1608.—“carry thy link a't'other side the way, thou *collow'st* me and my ruffe.” The word (as I am assured) is still used in the midland counties.—*Colly*, however, is from *coal*, as *collier*. STEEVENS.

561. —*he that is approv'd in this offence,*] He that is convicted by proof, of having been engaged in this offence. JOHNSON.



566. —*and on the court and guard of safety!*] This, it must be confessed, is the reading of all the old copies. Yet I have no doubt that the words were transposed by mistake at the press, when the first quarto was printed, which the other editions have followed. I would read :

—on *the court of guard* and safety.

The *court of guard* was formerly a military phrase, meaning *the guard-room*. The same phrase having occurred already in this play, act ii. line 232. puts the emendation proposed beyond a doubt : “ —the lieutenant to-night watches on *the court of guard*.” — A similar mistake has happened again in the present scene, where, in the old copy we find—

Have you forgot all *place of sense* and duty ?  
instead of—all *sense of place*, &c. MALONE.

As a collocation of words as seemingly perverse occurs in the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, and is justified there, in the following instance—

“ I shall desire *you of* more acquaintance.”  
I forbear to disturb the text in the passage under consideration. STEEVENS.

568. *If partially* affin'd—] *Affin'd* is bound by proximity of relationship ; but here it means related by nearness of office. In the first scene it is used in the former of these senses :

“ If I, in any just term, am *affin'd*

“ To love the Moor.”

STEEVENS.

607. *Lead him off.*] I am persuaded, these words were originally a marginal direction. In our old plays



plays all the stage directions were couched in imperative terms :—*Play musick—Ring the bell—Lead him off.*

MALONE.

620. —*there is more offence, &c.*] Thus the quartos. The folio reads—*there is more sense, &c.*

STEEVENS.

626. —*cast in his mood—*] Ejected in his anger.

JOHNSON.

632. —*and speak, parrot?*] A phrase signifying to act foolishly and childishly. So Skelton,

“ These maidens full mekely with many a divers  
flour,

“ Freshly they dress and make sweete my houre,

“ With *spake parrot* I pray you full courteously  
thei saye.”

WARBURTON.

670. —*for that he hath devoted, and given up himself to the contemplation, mark, and devotement, of her parts and graces.—*] I remember, it is said of Antony, in the beginning of his tragedy, that he who used to fix his eyes altogether on the dreadful ranges of war :

“ —now bends, now turns,

“ The office and *devotion* of their view

“ Upon a strumpet's front.”

This is finely expressed ; but I cannot persuade myself that our poet would ever have said, any one *devoted* himself to the *devotement* of any thing. All the copies agree ; but the mistake certainly arose from a single letter being turned upside down at press.

THEOBALD.

692. —*this advice is free—*] This counsel has an  
appearance



appearance of honest openness, of frank good-will.

JOHNSON.

Rather *gratis*, not *paid for*, as his advice to Rodrigo was.

HENLEY.

693. *Probable*] The old editions concur in reading *probal*. There may be such a contraction of the word, but I have not met with it in any other book. Yet, abbreviations as violent occur in our ancient writers.

STEEVENS.

696. *fruitful*] Corresponding to *benignus*, ἀφθονος.

HENLEY.

697. —*free elements* :] Liberal, bountiful, as the elements, out of which all things are produced.

JOHNSON.

704. —*to this parallel course*,] i. e. a course level, and even with his design.

JOHNSON.

706. *When devils will their blackest sins put on,*  
*They do suggest—*] When devils would *instigate* men to the commission of the most atrocious crimes. To *suggest*, in old language, is to *tempt*.

MALONE.

711. *I'll pour this pestilence—*] Pestilence, for poison.

WARBURTON.

712. *That she repeals him—*] That is, recalls him.

JOHNSON.

717. *That shall enmesh them all.—*] A metaphor from taking birds in meshes.

POPE.

Why not from the taking fish, for which purpose nets are more frequently used?

MONCK MASON.



723. —*a little more wit,*] Thus the folio. The first quarto reads—and *with that wit.* STEEVENS.

731. *Though other things grow fair against the sun,  
Yet fruits, that blossom first, will first be ripe.]*  
Of many different things, all planned with the same art, and promoted with the same diligence, some must succeed sooner than others, by the order of nature. Every thing cannot be done at once; we must proceed by the necessary gradation. We are not to *despair* of slow events any *more* than of tardy fruits, while the causes are in regular progress, and the fruits *grow fairer against the sun.* Hanmer has not, I think, rightly conceived the sentiment; for he reads,

*Those fruits which blossom first, are not first ripe.*  
I have therefore drawn it out at length, for there are few to whom that will be easy which was difficult to Hanmer. JOHNSON.

741. —*will draw*] The old copies read—to draw, which may be right, and consistent with the tenor of this interrupted speech. Iago is still debating with himself concerning the means to perplex Othello.

STEEVENS.

742. *bring him jump*] *Unexpectedly*:—an expression taken from the bound, or start, with which we are shocked, at the sudden and unlooked-for appearance of any offensive object. HENLEY.



ACT III.

Line 3. *WHY, masters, have your instruments been in Naples, that they speak i' the nose thus?*] The venereal disease first appeared at the siege of Naples.

JOHNSON.

When Mr. Stuart, in sifting the grounds of evidence relative to the Douglas cause, pressed Menager to account for La Marr's assertion, that he had passed ten months at *Naples*, though he never had been in Italy:—the answer was, “that his friend was very much of a *libertin*, and that he had often suffered by the *maladie venerienne*; and that as that disease in France often goes under the name of the *maladie de Naples*, from whence it came, La Marr, by the *voyage de Naples*, had probably meant to intimate, that he had lately *passé le grand remède pour la maladie venerienne*.” Letters to Lord Mansfield, from Andrew Stuart, Esq; No. iii. p. 19.

HENLEY.

13. —*of all loves*.—] The folio reads—*for love's sake*.

STEEVENS.

20. —*vanish into air*.] So the folio and one of the quartos. The eldest quarto reads—*Vanish away*.

STEEVENS.

52. *To take the safest occasion by the front*,] This line is wanting in the folio.

STEEVENS.

61. *I am much bound to you*.] This speech is omitted in the first quarto.

STEEVENS.



63. —*state* :] The folio reads—*senate*. MALONE.

72. *As if the case were his.*] The folio reads—As if the *cause* were his. STEEVENS.

84. *That policy may either last so long,*] He may either of himself think it politick to keep me out of office so long, or he may be satisfied with such slight reasons, or so many accidents may make him think my re-admission at that time improper, that I may be quite forgotten. JOHNSON.

93. *I'll watch him tame—*] It is said, that the ferocity of beasts, insuperable and irreclaimable by any other means, is subdued by keeping them from sleep. JOHNSON.

Hawks and other birds are tamed by keeping them from sleep, and it is to the management of those Shakspeare alludes.

In the *Booke of Haukyng, Huntynge, &c.* bl. let. no date : “*Wake her all nyght, and on the morrowe all daye, and then she will be previ enough to be re-claymed.*” STEEVENS.

119. *His present reconciliation take :*] To *take his reconciliation*, may be to accept the submission which he makes in order to be reconciled. JOHNSON.

121. —*and not in cunning,*] *Cunning*, for design, or purpose, simply. WARBURTON.

127. *To suffer with him :*] The first quarto reads—I suffer with him. MALONE.

141. —*the wars must make examples*

*Out of their best—*] The severity of military discipline must not spare the *best men* of the army,



when their punishment may afford a wholesome *example*. JOHNSON.

146. —*so mammering on?*] To hesitate, to stand in suspense. The word often occurs in old English writings, and probably takes its original from the French *m'Amour*, which men were apt often to repeat when they were not prepared to give a direct answer.

HANMER.

I find the same word in *Acolastus*, a comedy, 1540: “I stand in doubt, or in a *mamorynge* between hope and fear.” STEEVENS.

159. —*full of poize*—] *i. e.* of weight. So, in *The Dumb Knight*, 1633:

“They are of *poize* sufficient—” STEEVENS.

168. *Excellent wretch!*—*Perdition catch my soul, But I do love thee! &c.*] The meaning of the word *wretch*, is not generally understood. It is now, in some parts of England, a term of the softest and fondest tenderness. It expresses the utmost degree of amiableness, joined with an idea, which perhaps all tenderness includes, of feebleness, softness, and want of protection. Othello, considering Desdemona as excelling in beauty and virtue, soft and timorous by her sex, and by her situation absolutely in his power, calls her, *Excellent wretch!* It may be expressed:

*Dear, harmless, helpless Excellence.* JOHNSON.

Sir *W. D'Avenant* uses the same expression in his *Cruel Brother*, 1630, and with the same meaning. It occurs twice: “*Excellent wretch!* with a timorous modesty she stifles up her utterance.” STEEVENS.



169. —when I love thee not,

*Chaos is come again.*] When my love is for a moment suspended by suspicion, I have nothing in my mind but discord, tumult, perturbation, and confusion. JOHNSON.

There is another meaning possible. *When I cease to love thee, the world is at an end*; i. e. there remains nothing valuable or important. The first explanation may be more elegant, the second is perhaps more easy. Shakspeare has the same thought in his *Venus and Adonis*:

“For he being dead, with him his beauty slain,  
“And, beauty dead, black *Chaos comes again.*”

STEEVENS.

The passage does not strike me in the same light in which it appeared to Dr. Johnson; as *Othello* hath not at this time the smallest doubt of his wife's fidelity. He means, I think, to say—*ere I cease to love thee, the world itself shall be reduced to its primitive chaos*. Shakspeare probably preferred—“*Chaos is come again,*” to “*Chaos shall come again,*”—as more bold and expressive. *Muretus*, a poet of the sixteenth century, has exactly the same thought:

“Tunc meo elabi possis de pectore, Lacci,  
“Aut ego, dum vivam, non meminisse tui?  
“Ante vel istius mundi compage soluta  
“Tetras in antiquum sit reditura *Chaos.*”

The meaning of Shakspeare appears very clearly from the following passage in the *Winter's Tale*, where the same thought is more fully expressed:

G ij

“—It



“——It cannot fail

“ But by the violation of my faith—and then

“ Let nature crush the sides of the earth together,

“ And mar the seeds within.” MALONE.

179. —*her.*] So all the old copies. Rowe altered the word to *it*. MALONE.

189. —*By heaven he echoes me,*

*As if there were some monster in his thought, &c.]*

Thus the eldest quarto. The second quarto reads :

——Why dost thou echo me,

As if there were some monster in thy thought, &c.

The folio reads :

——Alas ! thou echo'st me,

As if, &c.——

STEEVENS.

207. *They are cold dilations working from the heart,*

*That passion cannot rule.]* The old copies uniformly give, *close dilations*, except that the earlier quarto has *close denotements*; which was the author's first expression, afterwards changed by him, not to *cold dilations*, for *cold* is read in no ancient copy: nor, I believe, to *close dilations*, but to *close delations*; to *occult* and *secret accusations*, *working involuntarily from the heart*, which, though resolved to conceal the fault, cannot rule its *passion* of resentment. JOHNSON.

This reading is so much more elegant than the former, that one cannot help wishing it to be right. But *delations* sounds to me too classical to have been used by Shakspeare.

The old reading—*close dilations* (in the sense of *secret expositions of the mind*) is authorized by a book  
of



of that age, which our author is known to have read :  
—“ After all this foul weather follows a calm *dilatation* of others’ too forward harmfulness.”—*Rosalynde* or *Euphues golden Legacie*, by Thomas Lodge, 1592.

MALONE.

*Cold delations* is the reading of the three latter folios.

REMARKS.

213. *Or, those that be not, ’would they might seem none !]* I believe the meaning is, *’would they might no longer seem, or bear the shape of men.* JOHNSON.

Perhaps the meaning is, *’would they might not seem honest !* MALONE.

227. *Keep leets and law-days—]* *Leets*, and *law-days*, are synonymous terms. “ *Leet* (says Jacob, in his *Law Dictionary*) is otherwise called a *law-day*.” They are there explained to be courts, or meetings of the *hundred*, “ to certify the king of the good manners and government of the inhabitants,” and to inquire of all offences that are not capital. The poet’s meaning will now be plain.—*Who has a breast so little apt to form ill opinions of others, but that foul suspicions will sometimes mix with his fairest and most candid thoughts, and erect a court in his mind, to inquire of the offences apprehended.*

STEEVENS.

233. *Though I, perchance, am vicious in my guess,]* Not to mention that, in this reading, the sentence is abrupt and broken, it is likewise highly absurd. I beseech you give yourself no uneasiness from my unsure observance, *though* I am vicious in my guess. For his being an ill guesser was a reason why Othello

G i i j

should



should not be uneasy : in propriety, therefore, it should either have been, *though I am not vicious, or because I am vicious.* It appears then we should read :

*I do beseech you,*

*Think, I, perchance, am vicious in my guess.*

Which makes the sense pertinent and perfect.

WARBURTON.

*Though I—perchance, am vicious in my guess,]* That abruptness in the speech which Dr. Warburton complains of, and would alter, may be easily accounted for. Iago seems desirous by this ambiguous hint, *Though I—*to inflame the jealousy of Othello, which he knew would be more effectually done in this manner, than by any expression that bore a determinate meaning. The jealous Othello would fill up the pause in the speech, which Iago turns off at last to another purpose, and find a more certain cause of discontent, and a greater degree of torture arising from the doubtful consideration how it might have concluded, than he could have experienced had the whole of what he inquired after been reported to him with every circumstance of aggravation.

We may suppose him imagining to himself, that Iago mentally continued the thought thus, *Though I—know more than I choose to speak of.*

I believe nothing is here wanting, but to regulate the punctuation :

*Iago.* I do beseech you—

*Though I, perchance, am vicious in my guess,*

*As, I confess, it is my nature's plague*

To



To spy into abuses; and, oft, my jealousy  
Shapes faults that are not—that your, &c.

HENLEY.

*Vicious in my guess* does not mean that he is an *ill-guesser*, but that he is apt to put the worst construction on every thing he attempts to account for.

STEEVENS.

236. —*that your wisdom yet,*] Thus the folio. The quarto thus :

—I intreat you then,  
From one that so imperfectly *conjects*,  
You'd take no notice——

To *conject*, i. e. to *conjecture*, is a verb used by other writers. So, in *Acolastus*, a comedy, 1540 :

“ Now reason I, or *conject* with myself.”

Again,

“ I cannot forget thy saying, or thy *conjecting*  
words.”

STEEVENS.

256. —*which doth mock*

*The meat it feeds on*—] i. e. loathes that which nourishes and sustains it. This being a miserable state, Iago bids him beware of it. The Oxford Editor reads :

———*which doth make*  
*The meat it feeds on.*———

Implying that its suspicions are unreal and groundless, which is the very contrary to what he would here make his general think, as appears from what follows :

*That cuckold lives in bliss, &c.*

In



In a word, the villain is for fixing him jealous : and therefore bids him beware of jealousy, not that it was an *unreasonable*, but a *miserable* state ; and this plunges him into it, as we see by his reply, which is only

*O misery !*

WARBURTON.

I have received Hanmer's emendation ; because *to mock*, does not signify *to loath* ; and because, when Iago bids Othello *beware of jealousy, the green-eyed monster*, it is natural to tell why he should beware, and for caution he gives him two reasons, that jealousy *often* creates its own cause, and that, when the causes are real, jealousy is misery.

JOHNSON.

In this place, and some others, *to mock* seems the same with *to mammock*.

FARMER.

If Shakspeare had written—*a green-ey'd monster*, we might have supposed him to refer to some creature existing only in his particular imagination ; but *the green-ey'd monster*, seems to have reference to an object as familiar to his readers as to himself.

It is known that the *tyger* kind have *green eyes*, and always play with the victim to their hunger, before they devour it. Thus, a jealous husband, who discovers no certain cause why he may be divorced, continues to sport with the woman whom he suspects, and, on more certain evidence, determines to punish. There is no beast that can be literally said to *make* its own food, and therefore I am unwilling to receive the emendation of Hanmer, especially as I flatter myself that a glimpse of meaning may be produced from the ancient reading.

In



In *Antony and Cleopatra* the contested word occurs again:

“ ———tell him

“ He *mocks* the pauses that he makes.”

i. e. he plays wantonly with those intervals of time which he should improve to his own preservation.

Should such an explanation be admissible, the advice given by Iago will amount to this:—*Beware, my lord, of yielding to a passion which as yet has no proofs to justify its access. Think how the interval between suspicion and certainty must be filled. Though you doubt her fidelity, you cannot yet refuse her your bed, or drive her from your heart; but, like the capricious savage, must continue to sport with one whom you wait for an opportunity to destroy.*

A similar idea occurs in *All's Well that Ends Well*:

“ ———so lust doth play

“ With what it loathes.”

Such is the only sense that I am able to draw from the original text. What I have said, may be liable to some objections, but I have nothing better to propose. That jealousy is *a monster* which often creates the suspicions on which it feeds, may be well admitted according to Hamner's proposition; but is it *the monster*? (i. e. a well known and conspicuous animal) or whence has it *green eyes*? *Yellow* is the colour which Shakspeare appropriates to jealousy. It must be acknowledged that he afterwards characterizes it as

—————a monster,

Begot upon itself, born on itself:

but



but yet——“What damned minutes counts he o’er, &c.” is the best illustration of my attempt to explain the passage. To produce Hanmer’s meaning, a change in the text is necessary. I am counsel for the old reading. STEEVENS.

*Yellow* is not always the colour which Shakspeare appropriates to jealousy; for we meet in *The Merchant of Venice*:

“——shudd’ring fear, and *green-ey’d* jealousy.” By “*the green-ey’d monster*,” I believe, Shakspeare only means—that green-eyed monster, which doth mock, &c. If we understand it in this way, it is the same as if he had said—a green-ey’d monster.

The passage alluded to by Mr. Steevens, in my opinion, strongly confirms the emendation proposed by Sir Thomas Hanmer [*make*]:

It is, strictly speaking, as false, that any monster can *beget* or be *born* on itself, as it is, that any monster can make his own food; but, poetically, both are equally true of that monster, JEALOUSY.

In *Measure for Measure*, act i. edit. 1623, *make* is printed instead of *mock*. MALONE.

It is so difficult, if not impossible, to extract any sense from this passage as it stands, even by the most forced construction of it; and the slight amendment proposed by Hanmer renders it so clear, elegant, and poetical, that I am surprised the editors should hesitate in adopting it, and still more surprised they should reject it. As for Mr. Steevens’s objection, that the definite article is used, not the indefinite, he surely need



need not be told in the very last of these plays, that Shakspeare did not regard such minute inaccuracies, which may be found in every play he wrote.

When Mr. Steevens compares the jealous man, who continues to sport with the woman he suspects, and is determined to destroy, to the tyger who plays with the victim of his hunger, he forgets that the meat on which jealousy is supposed to feed, is not the woman who is the object of it, but the several circumstances of suspicion which jealousy itself creates, and which cause and nourish it. So Æmilia, at the end of the third act in answer to Desdemona, who speaking of Othello's jealousy says,

Alas the day! I never gave him cause.

Replies,

But jealous fools will not be answered so;

They are not jealous ever for the cause,

But jealous, for they are jealous—'tis a monster

*Begot upon itself, born on itself.*

This passage is a strong confirmation of Hanmer's reading.

The same idea occurs in Massinger's *Picture*, where Matthias, speaking of the groundless jealousy he entertained of Sophia's possible inconstancy, says,

“———but why should I nourish

“ A fury here, and with *imagin'd food*,

“ Holding no real ground, on which to raise

“ A building of suspicion she was ever,

“ Or can be false?”

*Imagin'd food*, is food created by imagination, the  
food



food that jealousy makes and feeds on.

MONCK MASON.

In order to make way for one alteration, Mr. Monck Mason is forced to foist in another; or else poor Shakspeare must be arraigned for a blunder of which he is totally guiltless. This gentleman's objections both to the text in its present state, and to Mr. Steevens's most happy illustration of it, originate entirely in his own misconception, and a jumble of figurative with literal expressions. To have been consistent with himself he should have charged Mr. Steevens with maintaining, that it was the property of a jealous husband, first to *mock* his WIFE, and afterwards to *eat* her.

In act v. line 321, the word *mocks* occurs in a sense somewhat similar to that in the passage before us.

Æmil. O mistress, villany hath made *mocks* with love!—

HENLEY.

260. —*strongly* loves!] Thus the quarto; the folio—*soundly* loves.

STEEVENS.

263. *But riches, fineless—*] Unbounded, endless, unnumbered treasures.

JOHNSON.

263. —*as poor as winter,*] Finely expressed: *winter* producing no fruits.

WARBURTON.

273. *To such exsuffolate and blown surmises,*] This odd and far-fetched word was made yet more uncouth in all the editions before Hanmer's, by being printed, *exsufflicate*. The allusion is to a bubble. Do not think, says the Moor, that I shall change the noble designs that now employ my thoughts, to sus-  
picious



pitions which, like bubbles *blown* into a wide extent, have only an empty shew without solidity; or that, in consequence of such empty fears, I will close with thy inference against the virtue of my wife. JOHNSON.

273. —*blown surmises,*

*Matching your inference.*] That is—such as you have mentioned in describing the torments of jealousy. The part of Iago's speech particularly alluded to, is that where he says,

But, Oh, what damned moments counts he o'er,  
Who doats, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly  
loves. MONCK MASON.

277. *Where virtue is, these are most virtuous.*] An action in itself indifferent, grows *virtuous* by its end and application. JOHNSON.

I know not why the modern editors, in opposition to the first quarto and folio, read *most* instead of *more*.

A passage in *All's Well that Ends Well*, is perhaps the best comment on the sentiment of Othello: "I have those good hopes of her, education promises: his disposition she inherits; which *makes fair gifts fairer.*" *Gratior e pulchro veniens et corpore virtus.*

STEEVENS.

*Most* is the reading of the second folio. REMARKS.

291. *Out of self-bounty be abus'd;—*] *Self-bounty*, for inherent generosity. WARBURTON.

292. —*our country disposition—*

*In Venice—*] Here Iago seems to be a Venetian. JOHNSON.

H

There



There is nothing in any other part of the play, properly understood, to imply otherwise. HENLEY.

295. *Is not to leave undone, but keep unknown.*] The folio, perhaps more clearly, reads :

Is not to leave't undone, but keep't unknown.

STEEVENS.

298. *And, when she seem'd—*] This and the following argument of Iago ought to be deeply impressed on every reader. Deceit and falsehood, whatever conveniences they may for a time promise and produce, are, in the sum of life, obstacles to happiness. Those, who profit by the cheat, distrust the deceiver, and the act, by which kindness was sought, puts an end to confidence.

The same objection may be made, with a lower degree of strength, against the imprudent generosity of disproportionate marriages. When the first heat of passion is over, it is easily succeeded by suspicion, that the same violence of inclination, which caused one irregularity, may stimulate to another : and those who have shewn, that their passions are too powerful for their prudence, will, with very slight appearances against them, be censured, as not very likely to restrain them by their virtue. JOHNSON.

303. *To seel her father's eyes up, close as oak—*] The oak is (I believe) the most *close-grained* wood of general use in England. *Close as oak*, means, *close as the grain of the oak*. I see no cause for alteration.

To *seel* is an expression taken from falconry.

STEEVENS.

To



To *seel*, signifies to hood-wink, see before.

314. To *grosser issues*,] *Issues*, for conclusions.

WARBURTON.

318. *My speech would fall into such vile success*,] *Success*, for succession, *i. e.* conclusion; not prosperous issue.

WARBURTON.

I rather think there is a depravation, and would read :

*My speech will fall into such vile excess.*

If *success* be the right word, it seems to mean *consequence* or *event*, as *successo* is used in Italian.

JOHNSON.

I think *success* may, in this instance, bear its common interpretation. What Iago means, seems to be this : “ Should you do so, my lord, my words would be attended by such an infamous degree of success, as my thoughts do not even aim at.” Iago, who counterfeits the feelings of virtue, might have said, *fall into success*, and *vile success*, because he would appear to Othello, to wish that the inquiry into Desdemona’s guilt might prove fruitless and unsuccessful.

STEEVENS.

The following passages will perhaps be considered as proofs of Dr. Johnson’s explanation.

*Palace of Pleasure*, bl. let.

“ Then the poor desolate women, fearing lest their case would sorte to some pitifull *successe*.”

*Promos and Cassandra*, 1578 :

“ God forbyd all hys hope should turne to such *successe*.”

HENDERSON.



329. —will *most rank*,] *Will*, is for wilfulness. It is so used by Ascham. A *rank will* is *self-will* overgrown and exuberant. JOHNSON.

347. *You shall by that perceive him, and his means*,] You shall discover whether he thinks his best *means*, his most powerful *interest*, is by the solicitation of your lady. JOHNSON.

348. —*strain his entertainment*] Press hard his re-admission to his pay and office. *Entertainment* was the military term for admission of soldiers.

JOHNSON.

354. *Fear not my government*.] Do not distrust my ability to contain my passion. JOHNSON.

357. —*with a learned spirit*,] The construction is, He knows with a learned spirit all qualities of human dealings. JOHNSON.

358. —*If I do prove her haggard*,] A *haggard* is a particular species of hawk. It is *difficult to be reclaimed*, but not *irreclaimable*.

From a passage in *Vittoria Corombona*, it appears that *haggard* was a term of reproach sometimes applied to a wanton: “Is this your perch, you *haggard*? fly to the stews.”

*Turbervile* says, that “the *haggart* falcons are the most excellent birds of all other falcons.” *Latham* gives to the *haggart* only the second place in the *valued file*.——*Haggard*, however, had a popular sense, and was used for *wild* by those who thought not on the language of falconers. STEEVENS.

359. *Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings*,]



strings,] *Jesses* are short straps of leather tied about the foot of a hawk, by which she is held on the fist.

HANMER.

In Heywood's comedy, called *A Woman killed with Kindness*, 1617, a number of these terms relative to hawking occur together :

“ Now she hath seiz'd the fowl, and 'gins to plume her ;

“ Rebeck her not ; rather stand still and check her.

“ So : seize her gets, her *jesses*, and her bells.”

STEEVENS.

360. *I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind*

*To prey at fortune.*—] The falconers always let fly the hawk against the wind ; if she flies with the wind behind her, she seldom returns. If, therefore, a hawk was for any reason to be dismissed, she was *let down the wind*, and from that time shifted for herself, and *preyed at fortune*. This was told me by the late Mr. Clark.

JOHNSON.

*I'll whistle her off, &c.]* This passage may possibly receive illustration from a similar one in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 2. sect. 1. mem. 3. “ As a long-winged hawke, when he is first *whistled off the fist*, mounts aloft, and for his pleasure fetcheth many a circuit in the ayre, still soaring higher and higher, till he comes to his full pitch, and in the end, when the game is sprung, comes down amaine, and *stoupes* upon a sudden.”

PERCY.

Again, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Bonduca* :

H i i j

“ —he



“ —he that basely

“ *Whistled his honour off to the wind, &c.*”

STEEVENS.

363. *Chamberers*] *i. e.* men of intrigue. So, in the Countess of Pembroke's *Antónius*, 1590 :

“ Fal'n from a souldier to a *chamberer*.”

STEEVENS.

The sense of *chamberers* may be ascertained from *Rom.* xiii. 13, where  $\mu\eta$  KOITAIΣ is rendered, in the common version, “ *not in CHAMBERING.*” HENLEY.

374. —*forked plague*—] In allusion to a *barbed* or *forked* arrow, which, once infixed, cannot be extracted.

JOHNSON.

Or rather, the *forked plague* is the cuckold's horns.

PERCY.

Dr. Johnson's may be right. I meet with the same thought in Middleton's comedy of *A Mad World my Masters*, 1608 :

“ While the broad arrow, with the *forked head*,

“ Misses his brows but narrowly.”

And, in *King Lear*,

“ —though the *fork* invade

“ The region of my heart.” —

Mr. Malone supports the explanation of Dr. Percy, by the following passage in Machin's *Dumb Knight*, 1633 :

“ Women, why were you made for man's affliction ?

“ You devils, shap'd like angels, through whose deeds

“ Our *forked shames* are made most visible.”

Again,



Again, from *Tarlton's Newes out of Purgatorie*: “—dub the old Squire Knight of the *forked order*.”

STEEVENS.

379. *Desdemona comes*.] Thus the quartos. The folio reads: *Look where she comes*. STEEVENS.

379. —*the generous islanders*] Are the islanders of rank, distinction. So, in *Measure for Measure*:

“The *generous* and gravest citizens

“Have hent the gates.”

*Generous* has here the power of *generosus*, Lat. This explanation, however, may be too particular.

STEEVENS.

387. *Your naphin, &c.*] That is, *handkerchief*. See *As You Like It*, act iv. line 328. STEEVENS.

396. —*I'll have the work ta'en out*.] That is, copied. Her first thoughts are, to have a copy made of it for her husband, and restore the original to Desdemona. But the sudden coming in of Iago, in a surly humour, makes her alter her resolution, to please him. The same phrase afterwards occurs between Cassio and Bianca. BLACKSTONE.

399. *I nothing, but to please his fantasy*.] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1622, reads:

*I nothing know but for his fantasy*. STEEVENS.

413. —*to the advantage, &c.*] I being opportunely here, took it up. JOHNSON.

422. *Be not you known on't*] The folio reads—

*Be not acknowne on't*. STEEVENS.

Thus, in *The Life of Ariosto*, subjoined to Sir John Harrington's translation of *Orlando*, p. 418, edit. 1607:

“Some



“Some say, he was married to her privilie, but durst not be *acknowne* of it.” PORSON.

432. ———*I did say so :—*] As this passage is supposed to be obscure, I shall attempt an explanation of it.

Iago first ruminates on the qualities of the passion which he is labouring to excite; and then proceeds to comment on its effects. *Jealousy* (says he) *with the smallest operation on the blood, flames out with all the violence of sulphur, &c.*

———*I did say so ;*

Look where he comes!——

*i. e.* I knew that the least touch of such a passion would not permit the Moor to enjoy a moment of repose;—I have just said that jealousy is a restless commotion of the mind; and look where Othello approaches, to confirm the propriety and justice of my observation. STEEVENS.

433. ———*nor mandragora,*] The *mandragoras* or *mandrake*, has a soporifick quality, and the ancients used it when they wanted an opiate of the most powerful kind. Thus, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“—Give me to drink *mandragora*.”

STEEVENS.

435. *Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep,  
Which thou hadst yesterday,*] The old quarto reads,

*Which thou owedst yesterday.*

And this is right, and of much greater force than the common reading: not to sleep, being finely called defrauding



defrauding the day of a debt of nature.

WARBURTON.

To *owe* is, in our author, oftener to *possess*, than to *be indebted*, and such was its meaning here; but as that sense was growing less usual, it was changed unnecessarily by the editors to *hadst*; to the same meaning more intelligibly expressed. JOHNSON.

To *owe* is used by the common people in Norfolk and Suffolk, almost universally in Shakspeare's sense.

\* \* \*

443. *What sense had I, &c.*] A similar passage to this and what follows it, is found in an *unpublished* tragi-comedy by Thomas Middleton, called THE WITCH.

“ I feele no ease, the burthen's not yet off  
 “ So long as the abuse sticks in my knowledge.  
 “ Oh, 'tis a paine of hell to know one's shame!  
 “ Had it byn hid and don, it had ben don happy,  
 “ For he that's ignorant lives long and merry.”

Again:

“ Had'st thou byn secret, then had I byn happy,  
 “ And had a hope (like man) of joies to come.  
 “ Now here I stand a stayne to my creation,  
 “ And, which is heavier than all torments to me,  
 “ The understanding of this base adultery, &c.”

This is uttered by a jealous husband who supposes himself to have just destroyed his wife.—

Again, *Iago* says:

Dangerous conceits, &c.—

——with a little act upon the blood  
 Burn like the mines of sulphur.

Thus



Thus *Sebastian*, in Middleton's play:—

“When a suspect doth catch once, it burnes  
maynely.”

A scene between *Francisca* and her brother *Antonio*, when she first excites his jealousy, has likewise several circumstances in common with the dialogue which passes between *Iago* and *Othello* on the same subject.

This piece contains also a passage very strongly resembling another in *Hamlet*, who says:—“I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a hand-saw.”—Thus, *Almachides*:—“There is some difference betwixt my joviall condition and the lunary state of madnes. I am not quight out of my witts: I know a bawd from an aqua-vitæ shop, a strumpet from wild fire, and a beadle from brimstone.”

For a further account of this MS. play, see a note on Mr. Malone's *Attempt to ascertain the order in which the pieces of Shakspeare were written*:—Article, *Macbeth*.

STEEVENS.

445. *I slept the next night well, was free and merry;*] Thus the quartos. The folio reads:

*I slept the next night well, fed well; was free and merry.*

STEEVENS.

454. *Farewel the plumed troop, and the big wars—  
Farewel the neighing steed, &c.]* In a very ancient drama entitled *Common Conditions*, printed about 1576, Sedmond, who has lost his sister in a wood, thus expresses his grief:

“But



“ But farewell now, my coursers brave, attrapp-  
ped to the ground,

“ Farewell! adue all pleasures eke, with comely  
hauke and hounde!

“ Farewell ye nobles all, farewell eche marsial  
knight,

“ Farewell ye famous ladies all, in whom I did  
delight!

“ Adue my native soile, adue Arbaccus kyng,

“ Adue eche wight, and marsial knight, adue  
eche living thyng!”

One is almost tempted to think that Shakspeare had  
read this old play. MALONE.

456. *The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife,*] In mentioning the *fife* joined with the *drum*, Shakspeare, as usual, paints from the life; those instruments accompanying each other being used in his age by the English soldiery. The *fife*, however, as a martial instrument, was afterwards entirely discontinued among our troops for many years, but at length revived in the war before the last. WARTON.

460. —*whose rude throats*] So Milton. *P. L.* b. 6.

“ From those *deep-throated* engines, &c.”

The quarto, 1622, reads—*whose wide throats*.

STEEVENS.

466. —*mine eternal soul,*] Perhaps the quarto, 1622, more forcibly reads:

—*man's eternal soul*.



Shakspeare might have designed an opposition between *man* and *dog*. STEEVENS.

475. —*abandon all remorse* ;] I believe, *remorse* in this instance, as in many others, signifies *pity*.

STEEVENS.

477. *Do deeds to make heaven weep*,] So, in *Measure for Measure* :

“Plays such fantastick tricks before high heaven,

“*As make the angels weep.*” STEEVENS.

483. *That liv’st*] Thus the quarto. The folio—*that lov’st*— STEEVENS.

491. *By the world, &c.*] This speech is not in the first edition. POPE.

505. *Behold her tupp’d?*] A ram in Staffordshire and some other counties is called a *tup*. So, in the first act:

——an old black ram

Is *tupping* your white ewe. STEEVENS.

513. *Were they as prime as goats*—] *Prime* is *prompt*, from the Celtic or British *Prim*. HANMER.

So, in the *Vow-breaker, or the Faire Maid of Clifton*, 1636:

“More *prime* than goats or monkies in their prides.” STEEVENS.

519. *Give me a living reason*—] The reading of the folio is smoother :

Give me a living reason she’s disloyal.

MALONE.

What Othello here demands is *actual* proof, arising from some positive FACT. HENLEY.



539. —*a foregone conclusion* :] *Conclusion*, for fact.

WARBURTON.

540. Othel. *'Tis a shrewd doubt, &c.*] The old quarto gives this line, with the two following, to Iago; and rightly.

WARBURTON.

I think it more naturally spoken by Othello, who, by dwelling so long upon the proof, encouraged Iago to enforce it.

JOHNSON.

544. —*yet, we see nothing done* ;] This is an oblique and secret mock at Othello's saying, *Give me the ocular proof*.

WARBURTON.

557. *Now do I see 'tis true*.——] The old quarto reads,

*Now do I see 'tis time*.——

And this is Shakspeare's, and has in it much more force and solemnity, and preparation for what follows; as alluding to what he had said before:

——*No, Iago!*

*I'll see before I doubt, when I doubt, prove;*

*And, on the proof, there is no more but this,*

*Away at once with love or jealousy.*

This *time* was now come.

WARBURTON.

560. —*thy hollow hell!*] Warburton proposed to read *cell*.

*The hollow hell* is the reading of the folio. The epithet *hollow* gives the idea of what Milton calls,

“——the void profound

“Of unessential night.”

STEEVENS.

And, in *Paradise Lost*, b. I. ver. 314. the same epithet and subject occur.



“ He call’d so loud that all the *hollow* deep

“ Of *hell* resounded.”

H. T. W.

561. ———hearted *throne*,] *Hearted* throne, is the heart on which thou wast *enthroned*. JOHNSON.

Iago uses the same word, though with a meaning somewhat different :

—My cause is *hearted*.

STEEVENS.

A passage in *Twelfth Night* fully supports the reading of the text, and Dr. Johnson’s explanation of it :

“ It gives a very echo to the *seat*

“ Where *Love* is *thron’d*.”

MALONE.

562. —*swell, bosom, &c.*] i. e. *swell*, because the fraught is of poison. WARBURTON.

567. —*Like to the Pontic sea, &c.*] This simile is not in the first edition. POPE.

When Shakspeare grew acquainted with such particulars of knowledge, he made a display of them as soon as opportunity offered. He found this in the Second Book and 97th Chapter of Pliny’s *Nat. Hist.* as translated by Philemon Holland, 1601 : “ And the sea Pontus evermore floweth and runneth out into Propontis, but the sea never retireth backe againe within Pontus.” STEEVENS.

573. —a capable and wide revenge

*Capable*] Ample ; capacious. So, in *As You Like It* :

“ The cicatrice and *capable* impressure.”

It may, however, mean *judicious*. In *Hamlet* the word is often used in the sense of *intelligent*. What Othello says in another place, seems to favour this latter



latter interpretation :

Good ; good ;—the *justice* of it pleases me.

MALONE.

574. —*by yond' marble heaven,*] In *Soliman and Perseda*, 1599, I find the same expression :

“ Now by the *marble* face of the welkin,” &c.

STEEVENS.

So, in Marston's *Antonio and Melida*, 1602 :

“ And pleas'd the *marble* heavens.” MALONE.

581. *The execution—*]. The first quarto reads *excellency*. STEEVENS.

582. —*let him command,*

*And to obey, shall be in me remorse,*

*What bloody business ever.*] Thus all the old copies, to manifest depravation of the poet's sense. Mr. Pope has attempted an emendation, but with his old luck and dexterity :

*Not to obey, shall be in me remorse, &c.*

I read, with the change only of a single letter :

*Nor, to obey, shall be in me remorse, &c.*

*i. e.* Let your commands be ever so bloody, remorse and compassion shall not restrain me from obeying them.

THEOBALD.

—*Let him command,*

*And to obey, shall be in me remorse,*

*What bloody business ever.*] Thus the old copies read, but evidently wrong. Some editions read, *Not to obey*; on which the editor, Mr. Theobald, takes occasion to alter it to, *Nor to obey*; and thought he had much mended matters. But he mistook the



sound end of the line for the corrupt; and so by his emendation, the deep-designing Iago is foolishly made to throw off his mask, when he had most occasion for it; and without any provocation, stand before his captain a villain confessed; at a time, when, for the carrying on his plot, he should make the least show of it. For thus Mr. Theobald forces him to say, *I shall have no remorse to obey your commands, how bloody soever the business be.* But this is not Shakspeare's way of preserving the unity of character. Iago, till now, pretended to be one, who, though in the trade of war he had slain men, yet held it the very stuff of the conscience to do no contrived murder; when, of a sudden, without cause or occasion, he owns himself a ruffian without remorse. Shakspeare wrote and pointed the passage thus:

—*Let him command,*

*And to obey shall be in me* REMORD.

*What bloody business ever.*

i. e. however the business he sets me upon may shock my honour and humanity, yet I promise to go through with it, and obey without reserve. Here Iago speaks in character, while the sense and grammar are made better by it.

So Skelton:

*“And if so him fortune to write and plaine,*

*“As sometimes he must vices remorde.”*

And again:

*“Squire, knight, and lord,*

*“Thus the churche remorde.”*

WARBURTON.

Of



Of these two emendations, I believe, Theobald's will have the greater number of suffrages; it has at least mine. The objection against the propriety of the declaration in Iago, is a cavil; he does not say that he has no principle of remorse, but that it shall not operate against Othello's commands. *To obey shall be in me, for I will obey you*, is a mode of expression not worth the pains here taken to introduce it; and the word *remorde* has not in the quotation the meaning of *withhold*, or *make reluctant*, but of *reprove*, or *censure*; nor do I know that it is used by any of the contemporaries of Shakspeare.

I will offer an interpretation, which, if it be received, will make alteration unnecessary, but it is very harsh and violent. Iago devotes himself to wronged Othello, and says, *Let him command whatever bloody business*, and in me it shall be an act, not of cruelty, but of *tenderness*, to obey him; not of malice to others, but of *tenderness* for him. If this sense be thought too violent, I see nothing better than to follow Pope's reading, as it is improved by Theobald.

JOHNSON.

Mr. Upton, in his *Critic. Observ.* p. 200, proposes to read:

*And to obey shall be in me no remorse.*

This reading the author of *The Revisal* approves; and Mr. Edwards seems to acquiesce in that of Theobald.

The different emendations of different commentators are laid before the publick for its determination on their merits; and I believe the present one, who



is to throw in his conjecture with the rest, may say at last with Deiphobus,

———*explebo numerum, reddarque tenebris.*

Iago offers in the most solemn manner, to risque himself for the service of Othello. *Let him command,* says he, *whatever bloody business,* and the remorse that follows the perpetration of such a deed shall *be entirely my own.* It shall be *remorse in me, in me alone.* I not only undertake to execute the bloody part of the business, but likewise to take upon myself the horrors of remorse, inseparable from the action. Iago makes use of this specious argument, the better to prevail on Othello to entrust the murder to his hands.

After all, I believe Dr. Johnson's interpretation to be the best; and can only claim the merit of supporting his sense of the word *remorse*, i. e. *pity* by the following instances:

In *King Edward III.* 1599, that prince speaking to the citizens of Calais:

“But for yourselves, look you for no *remorse.*”

Again, in *Sir John Oldcastle*, 1600:

“Here stand I craving no *remorse* at all.”

I could add many more instances, but shall content myself to observe, that the sentiment of Iago bears no small resemblance to that of *Arviragus* in *Cymbeline*:

“I'd let a parish of such Clotens' blood,

“And praise myself for charity.” STEEVENS:

If I am not deceived, this passage has been entirely mistaken. I read:

“Let



“ Let *him* command :

“ An’ to obey shall be in *me* remorse,

“ What bloody business ever——”

*And for if* is sufficiently common : and *Othello’s* impatience breaks off the sentence ; I think, with additional beauty.

FARMER.

Before I saw Dr. Johnson’s edition of Shakspeare, my opinion of this passage was formed, and written, and thus I understood it : “ Let him command any bloody business, and to obey shall be in me an act of pity and compassion for wrong’d Othello.” *Remorse* frequently signifies pity, mercy, compassion, or a tenderness of heart, unattended with the stings of a guilty conscience.

TOLLET.

The sentiment of Iago seems to be this :—whatever bloody deed he may command me to perpetrate, my zeal to serve him shall cause that which, in *another*, would be *remorse*, in *me* to be *obedience*.

The poet finely discriminates between the extremes of wickedness in the sexes, when he makes Lady Macbeth invoke *preternatural aid* to produce an effect similar to that which Iago accomplishes by the exertion only of *his own resolution*, act i. line 361.

———Come, you spirits !

That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,  
And fill me from the crown to the toe, top-full  
Of direst cruelty ! make thick my blood,  
Stop up the access and passage to *remorse* ;  
That no compunctious visitings of nature  
Shake my fell purposes, &c.

HENLEY.

And



And to obey *shall be in me* remorse.] This mode of speaking is not confined to Shakspeare. Thus in *Purchas's Pilgrim*, vol. iv. 1196 :

“ It could *not be in them* to make resistance !”

HENDERSON.

584. *What bloody work soever*.] So the quartos. The folio :

What bloody *business ever*.

STEEVENS.

603. *To tell you, &c.*] This and the following speech are wanting in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

611. Clown. *I will catechize the world for him ; that is, make questions, and by them answer.*] This Clown is a fool to some purpose. He was to go seek for one ; he says, he will ask for him, and by his own questions make answer. Without doubt we should read, *and bid them answer ; i. e. the world ; those whom we question.*

WARBURTON.

*By them answer.*] There is no necessity for changing the text. It is the clown's play to wrench what is said, from its proper meaning. Sir T. More hath briefly worked his character : “ he plaieth the iester, nowe with skoffinge, and nowe with his overthwarte woords, to prouoke all to laughter.” His design here was to propose such questions as might elicit the information sought for from him, and therefore, *BY* his questions he might be enabled to answer. HENLEY.

622. —*cruzadoes* :—] A coin so called from the cross stamped upon it. JOHNSON.

638. *Hot, hot, and moist* :] Ben Jonson seems to have attempted a ridicule on this passage, in *Every Man out*



out of his Humour, act v. sc. ii. where Sogliardo says to Saviolina : “ How does my sweet Lady ? *hot and moist ? beautiful and lusty ?*” STEEVENS.

Ben Jonson was ready enough on all occasions to depreciate and ridicule our author, but in the present instance, I believe, he must be acquitted ; for *Every Man out of his Humour* was printed in 1600, and written probably in the preceding year ; at which time, we are almost certain that *Othello* had not been exhibited.

MALONE.

646. — *The hearts of old gave hands ;*

*But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts.*] It is evident that the first line should be read thus :

*The hands of old gave hearts :*

Otherwise it would be no reply to the preceding words,

*For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart :*

Not so, says her husband : *The hands of old indeed gave hearts ; but the custom now is to give hands without hearts.*

The expression of *new heraldry* was a satirical allusion to the times. Soon after James the First came to the crown, he created the new dignity of baronets, for money. Amongst their other prerogatives of honour, they had an addition to their paternal *arms*, of a hand *gules* in an escutcheon *argent*. And we are not to doubt but that this was the *new heraldry* alluded to by our author : by which he insinuates, that some then created had *hands* indeed, but not *hearts* : that is, *money* to pay for the *creation*, but no *virtue* to purchase the *honour*. James's pretence for raising money by this creation, was



was the reduction of Ulster, and other parts of Ireland; the memory of which he would perpetuate by that addition to their arms, it being the arms of Ulster.

WARBURTON.

The historical observation is very judicious and acute; but of the emendation there is no need. She says, that her hand gave away *her heart*. He goes on with his suspicion, and the hand which he had before called *frank*, he now terms *liberal*; then proceeds to remark, that *the hand was formerly given by the heart*; but now it neither gives it, nor is given by it.

JOHNSON.

I think, with Dr. Warburton, that the new order of baronets is here again alluded to. See *Merry Wives of Windsor*, act ii. and Spelman's Epigram cited in the note.

BLACKSTONE.

—*our new heraldry, &c.*] I believe this to be only a figurative expression, without the least reference to king James's creation of baronets. The absurdity of making Othello so familiar with British heraldry, the utter want of consistency as well as policy in any sneer of Shakspeare at the badge of honours instituted by a prince, whom on all other occasions he was solicitous to flatter, and at whose court this very piece was acted in 1613, very strongly incline me to question the propriety of Dr. Warburton's historical explanation.

STEEVENS.

651. —*salt and sorry rheum*—] The old quartos has,

——*salt and sullen rheum*——

That



That is, a *rheum absolutely troublesome*. I think this better. JOHNSON.

658. *That handkerchief*

*Did an Egyptian to my mother give :]* In the account of this tremendous handkerchief, are some particulars which lead me to think, that here is an allusion to a fact, heightened by poetical imagery. It is the practice in the eastern regions, for persons of both sexes to carry handkerchiefs very curiously wrought. In the MS. papers of Sir John Chardin, that great oriental traveller, is a passage which fully describes the custom. “The mode of wrought handkerchiefs (says this learned inquirer), is general in Arabia, in Syria, in Palestine, and in all the Turkish empire. They are wrought with a needle, and it is the amusement of the fair sex there, as among us the making tapestry and lace. The young women make them for their fathers, their brothers, and by way of preparation before hand for their spouses, bestowing them as favours on their lovers. They have them almost constantly in their hands in those warm countries, to wipe off sweat.” But whether this circumstance ever came to Shakspeare’s knowledge, and gave rise to the incident, I am not able to determine. WHALLEY.

674. *A sybil, &c.]* This circumstance, perhaps, is imitated by Ben Jonson in the *Sad Shepherd*:

“A Gypsan lady, and a right beldame,

“Wrought it by moon-shine for me, and star-light,” &c. STEEVENS.

674.



674. —*number'd*—

*The sun to course*—] i. e. number'd the sun's courses : badly expressed. WARBURTON.

The expression is not very infrequent? we say, *I counted the clock to strike four* : so she *number'd* the sun *to course*, to run *two hundred compasses*, two hundred annual circuits. JOHNSON.

675. —*to course*—] The first quarto reads—to *make*— STEEVENS.

678. *And it was dy'd in mummy*,—] The balsamick liquor running from *mummies*, was formerly celebrated for its anti-epileptic virtues. We are now wise enough to know, that the qualities ascribed to it are all imaginary; and yet I have been informed, that this fanciful medicine still holds a place in the shops where drugs are sold. So, in *The Bird in a Cage*, by Shirley, 1633 :

“ —make *mummy* of my flesh, and sell me to the apothecaries.”

Again, in *The Honest Lawyer*, 1616 :

“ That I might tear their flesh in mamocks, raise

“ My losses, from their carcasses turn'd *mummy*.”

STEEVENS.

678. —*which the skilful*

*Conserv'd of maidens' hearts*.] Thus the folio.

The quarto reads—*with the skilful*

*Conserves*, &c.

STEEVENS.

684. —*rash*?] Is *vehement*, *violent*.

JOHNSON.

699. *I pray talk me of Cassio*.] This and the following



ing short speech are omitted in all ancient editions but the first quarto.

STEEVENS.

721. —*the office of my heart,*] The elder quarto reads,

—*the duty of my heart.*

The author used the more proper word, and then changed it, I suppose, for fashionable diction; but, as fashion is a very weak protectress, the old word is now ready to resume its place.

JOHNSON.

729. *And shoot myself up*—] This is the reading of one of the early quartos. The folio, and all the modern editions, have,

*And shut myself up*—

JOHNSON.

The quarto 1630 (like the folio) reads,

*And shut myself up*—

I cannot help thinking this reading to be the true one. The idea seems taken from the confinement of a monastick life. The words, *forc'd content*, help to confirm the supposition. The meaning will therefore be, “I will put on a constrained appearance of being contented, and shut myself up in a different course of life, no longer to depend on my own efforts, but to wait for relief from the accidental hand of charity.”

Shakspeare uses the same expression in *Macbeth*:

“—and shut up

“In measureless content.”

Again, in *All's Well that Ends Well*:

“Whose basest stars do shut us up in wishes.”

STEEVENS.

K

I cannot



I cannot agree with Mr. Steevens in approving of the present reading, nor of course, in his explanation of this passage; but think the quarto right, which reads *shoot* instead of *shut*.—To say that a man will shut himself up in a course of life, is language such as Shakspeare would never make use of, even in his most whimsical or licentious moments.

One of the meanings of the verb *to shoot*, is to *push suddenly*, or to *push forward*; and in that sense it is used in this place. Cassio means to say, that if he finds he has no chance of regaining the favour of the general, he will push forward into some other line of life, and seek his fortune; but I think it probable we ought to read—And shoot myself *upon* some other course, instead of *up in* some other course.

MONCK MASON.

Mr. Mason's explanation is a very forced one.—It appears from the information of Iago, that Cassio had not long been a soldier. Before Othello promoted him, for his good offices in respect to Desdemona, he was “a great arithmetician, a counter-caster;” and now, being discarded from the military line, he purposes to *confine*, or *shut himself up*, as he formerly had, within the limits of a new profession.

HENLEY.

734. —*in favour*————] In look, in countenance.

JOHNSON.

737. —*within the blank of his displeasure,*] Within the *shot* of his anger.

JOHNSON.

751.



751. —*some unhatch'd practice,*] Some treason that has not taken effect. JOHNSON.

762. —(*unhandsome warrior as I am*)] How this came to be so blundered, I cannot conceive. It is plain Shakspeare wrote,

——*unhandsome wrangler as I am.*

So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“——*fie, wrangling queen.*” WARBURTON.

*Unhandsome warrior, is evidently unfair assailant.*

JOHNSON.

791. —*more convenient time*] The folio has,

——*more continue time*;

*Time less interrupted, time which I can call more my own. It gives a more distinct image than convenient.*

JOHNSON.

The word occurs again in *Timon*:

“——*breath'd as it were,*

“*To an untirable and continue goodness.*”

STEEVENS.

793. *Take me this work out.*] The meaning is not, Pick out the work, and leave the ground plain; but Copy this work in another handkerchief. JOHNSON.

So, in a comedy, by Middleton, called *Women beware of Women*:

“——*she intends*

“*To take out other works in a new sampler.*”

STEEVENS.

So, in Hearne's *Liber Niger Scaccarii*, vol. ii. p. 578.

581. and 585. “*to take out the arms,*” means to copy them. TOLLET.



812. *Why, I pray you?*] This and the following speech are wanting in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

819. —*I must be circumstanc'd.*] i. e. your civility is now grown conditional. WARBURTON.

Rather, I must give way to circumstances.

MONCK MASON.

### ACT IV.

Line 8. *N*AKED in bed, Iago, and not mean harm?

*It is hypocrisy against the devil:*] This observation seems strangely abrupt and unoccasioned. We must suppose that Iago had, before they appeared in this scene, been applying cases of false comfort to Othello; as that though the parties had been even found in bed together, there might be no harm done; it might be only for the trial of their virtue; as was reported of the Romish saint Robert D'Arbrissel and his nuns. To this we must suppose Othello here replies; and like a good Protestant. For so the sentiment does but suit the character of the speaker, Shakspeare little heeds how these sentiments are circumstanced.

WARBURTON.

*Hypocrisy against the devil*, means hypocrisy to cheat the devil. As common hypocrites cheat men, by seeming good, and yet living wickedly; these men would cheat the devil, by giving him flattering hopes,  
and



and at last avoiding the crime which he thinks them ready to commit. JOHNSON.

11. *The devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt heaven.*] The true reading, without question, is this:

*The devil their virtue tempts not; they tempt heaven.*  
i. e. they do not give the devil the trouble of throwing temptations in their way: they seek them out themselves, and so tempt heaven by their presumption.

WARBURTON.

There is no need for any alteration. The true key to the explanation of this passage may be found in St. Matthew iv. 7. The poet's idea, is, that *the devil tempts their virtues*, by stirring up their passions, and *they tempt heaven*, by placing themselves in such a situation as makes it scarcely possible to avoid falling by the gratification of them. HENLEY.

Shakspeare had probably in view a very popular book of his time, *The Beehive of the Roman Church*. "There was an old wife, called *Julia*, which would take the young men and maides, and lay them together in a bed. And for that they should not one byte another, nor kicke backewardest with their heeles, she did lay a crucifix between them." FARMER.

25. *Boading to all—*] Thus all the old copies. The moderns less grammatically,

*Boding to ill—*

JOHNSON.

The raven was thought to be a constant attendant on a house, in which there was infection. So, in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, 1633:

K iij

"Thus



“ Thus like the sad presaging *raven*, that tolls  
 “ The sick man’s passport in her hollow beak,  
 “ And in the shadow of the silent night  
 “ Does shake contagion from her sable wing.”

MALONE.

32. *Convinc’d or supplied them,*] I cannot understand the vulgar reading. I read, *convinc’d or suppld*. My emendation makes the sense of the passage easy and intelligible: that there are some such long-tongued knaves in the world, who, if they through the *force of importunity* extort a favour from their mistress, or if through *her own fondness* they make her *pliant* to their desires, cannot help boasting of their success. To *convince*, here, is not, as in the common acceptation, to make sensible of the truth of any thing by reasons and arguments: but to *overcome, get the better of, &c.*

So in *Macbeth*, act i.

“ —his two chamberlains

“ Will I, with wine and wassel so *convince*.”

Again, in the same play, act iv.

“ — their malady *convinces*

“ The great assay of art.”

THEOBALD.

46. —*to confess and be hang’d*—] This is a proverbial saying. And in one of the old collection of small Poems there is an epigram on it. All that remains of this speech, including the words *to confess*, is wanting in the first quarto.

STEEVENS.

49. —*shadowing passion*—] The modern editions have left out *passion*.

JOHNSON.



49. —*without some instruction.*—] The starts and broken reflections in this speech have something very terrible, and shew the mind of the speaker to be in inexpressible agonies. But the words we are upon, when set right, have a sublime in them that can never be enough admired. The ridiculous blunder of writing *instruction* for *induction* (for so it should be read) has indeed sunk it into arrant nonsense. Othello is just going to fall into a swoon; and, as is common for people in that circumstance, feels an unusual mist and darkness, accompanied with horror, coming upon him. This, with vast sublimity of thought, is compared to the season of the sun's eclipse, at which time the earth becomes shadowed by the *induction*, or bringing over of the moon between it and the sun. This being the allusion, the reasoning stands thus: "My nature  
" could never be thus overshadowed, and falling, as it  
" were, into dissolution, for no cause. There must  
" be an *induction* of something; there must be a real  
" cause. My jealousy cannot be merely imaginary.  
" Ideas, *words* only, could not shake me thus, and  
" raise all this disorder. My jealousy therefore must  
" be grounded on matter of fact." Shakspeare uses this word in the same sense, in *Richard III.*

"A dire *induction* am I witness to."

Marston seems to have read it thus in some copy, and to allude to it in these words of his *Fame*:

"Plots ha' you laid? *inductions* dangerous!"

WARBURTON.

This



This is a noble conjecture, and, whether right or wrong, does honour to its author. Yet I am in doubt whether there is any necessity of emendation. There has always prevailed in the world an opinion, that when any great calamity happens at a distance, notice is given of it to the sufferer by some dejection or perturbation of mind, of which he discovers no external cause. This is ascribed to that general communication of one part of the universe with another, which is called sympathy and antipathy; or to the secret monition, *instruction*, and influence of a superior Being, which superintends the order of nature and of life. Othello says, *Nature could not invest herself in such shadowing passion without instruction. It is not words that shake me thus.* This passion, which spreads its clouds over me, is the effect of some agency more than the operation of words; it is one of those notices which men have of unseen calamities. JOHNSON.

However ingenious Dr. Warburton's note may be, it is certainly too forced and far-fetched. Othello alludes only to Cassio's dream, which had been invented and told him by Iago. When many confused and very interesting ideas pour in upon the mind all at once, and with such rapidity that it has not time to shape or digest them, if it does not relieve itself by tears (which we know it often does, whether for joy or grief) it produces stupefaction and fainting.

Othello, in broken sentences and single words, all of which have a reference to the cause of his jealousy, shews, that all the proofs are present at once to his mind,



mind, which so overpowers it, that he falls into a trance, the natural consequence. Sir J. REYNOLDS.

50. *Noses, ears, and lips :*] Othello is imagining to himself the familiarities which he supposes to have passed between Cassio and his wife. So, in the *Winter's Tale* :

“ Cheek to cheek,—meeting *noses*—

“ Kissing with inside *lip*,” &c.—

If this be not the meaning, we must suppose he is meditating a cruel punishment for Desdemona and her suspected paramour :

“ ———raptis

“ *Auribus, et truncas inhonesta vulnere nares.*”

STEEVENS.

73. *A horned man*—] In *Much Ado about Nothing*, I omitted to attempt the illustration of a passage where Benedick says—“there is no staff more honourable than one *tipt with horn*.” Perhaps he alludes to the staff which was anciently carried before a challenger. Thus, in Stowe's *Chronicle*, edition 1615, p. 669 : “—his baston (a staffe of an elle long, made taper-wise, *tipt with horne*) &c. was borne before him.”

STEEVENS.

80. *in those improper beds,*] *Unproper*, for common.

WARBURTON.

So, in *The Arcadia*, by Shirley, 1640 :

“ Ever woman shall be common.—

“ Every woman common ! what shall we do with all the *proper* women in *Arcadia* ?

“ They shall be common too.” STEEVENS.



88. —*list*.] The obvious meaning of *list*, is *bounds*. Keep your temper, says Iago, within the *bounds of patience*. COLLINS.

So, in *King Henry V.* act v. sc. 2: “—you and I cannot be confined within the weak *list* of a country fashion.”

Again, in *King Henry IV.* Part I.

“The very *list*, the very utmost bound,

“Of all our fortunes.”

Again, in *All's Well that Ends Well*, act ii. sc. 1.

“—you have restrain'd yourself within the *list* of too cold an adieu.” STEEVENS.

89. —*ere while, mad with your grief*,] Thus the first quarto. The folio reads:

——o'erwhelmed with your grief. STEEVENS.

94. —*encave yourself*.] Hide yourself in a private place. JOHNSON.

101. *Or shall I say, your're all in all in spleen*,] I read:

*Or shall I say, you're all in all a spleen.*

I think our author uses this expression elsewhere.

JOHNSON.

A hair-brain'd Hotspur, govern'd by a *spleen*. The old reading, however, is not inexplicable. We still say, such one is *in* wrath, *in* the dumps, &c. The sense therefore is plain. Again, in *The Midsummer Night's Dream*:

“That, in a *spleen*, unfolds both heaven and earth.”—— STEEVENS.



116. *And his unbookish jealousy—*] *Unbookish*, for ignorant. WARBURTON.

135. *Do you triumph, Roman? do you triumph?*] Othello calls him *Roman* ironically. *Triumph*, which was a Roman ceremony, brought Roman into his thoughts. *What* (says he) *you are now triumphing as great as a Roman?* JOHNSON.

136. *—a customer!—*] A common woman, one that invites custom. JOHNSON.

So, in *All's Well that Ends Well*:

“I think thee now some common *customer*.”

STEEVENS.

143. *Have you scor'd me?—*] Have you made my reckoning? have you settled the term of my life? The old quarto reads, *stored* me. Have you disposed of me? have you laid me up? JOHNSON

To *score* originally meant no more than to cut a notch upon a tally, or to mark out a form by indenting it on any substance. Spenser, in the first Canto of his *Fairy Queen*, speaking of the cross, says:

“Upon his shield the like was also *scor'd*.”

Again, b. ii. c. 9:

“——why on your shield, so goodly *scor'd*,

“Bear you the picture of that lady's head?”

But it was soon figuratively used for setting a *brand* or *mark* of disgrace on any one. “Let us *score* their backs,” says Scarus, in *Antony and Cleopatra*; and it is employed in the same sense on the present occasion.

STEEVENS.

151. *—by this hand—*] This is the reading of the first quarto. STEEVENS.



162. —*fitchew*!—] A pole-cat. POPE.

Shakspeare has in another place mentioned the lust of this animal. Cassio tells Iago, that she is as lewd as the *pole-cat*, but of better scent, the pole-cat being a very stinking animal. JOHNSON.

A *pole-cat* was anciently one of the cant terms for a strumpet. STEEVENS.

200. —*No, my heart is turn'd to stone; I strike it and it hurts my hand.*—] This thought, as often as it occurs to Shakspeare, is sure to be received, and as often counteracts his *pathos*. STEEVENS.

251. —*atone them,*—] Make them *one*; reconcile them. JOHNSON.

Few words have occasioned the spilling of so much Christian ink as the word *atone*, which is here used in its proper sense. So likewise in *Cymbeline*, act i.

“*To atone my countryman and you.*”

Again, in *As you Like It*, act v. line 338.

“Then there is mirth in heaven,

“When earthly things made even

“*Atone* together.”

This expression is formed by the coalescence of the words *at one*, the verb to *set*, or some equivalent being omitted. Thus, in the *acts*:—“he shewed himself to them as they strove and would have *set* them AT ONE again.” and in *The Beehive of the Romish Church*: “through which God is *made* AT ONE with us, and hath forgiven us our sins.” HENLEY.

270. *If that the earth would teem, &c.*] If women's tears could impregnate the earth. By the doctrine of equivocal



equivocal generation, new animals were supposed producible by new combinations of matter. See Bacon.

JOHNSON.

271. *Each drop she falls*] *To fall* is here a verb active. So, in *The Tempest*:

“—when I rear my hand, do you the like,

“*To fall* it on Gonzalo.”

STEEVENS.

284. *Proceed you in your tears.*—] I cannot think that the poet meant to make Othello bid Desdemona *to continue weeping*, which *proceed you in your tears* (as the passage is at present pointed) must mean. He rather would have said,

——*Proceed you in your tears?*——

What! will you still continue to be a hypocrite by a display of this *well-painted passion*? WARNER.

289. *Cassio shall have my place.*] Perhaps this is addressed to *Desdemona*, who had just expressed her joy on hearing *Cassio* was deputed in the room of her husband. Her innocent satisfaction in the hope of returning to her native place is construed by Othello into the pleasure she received from the advancement of his rival.

STEEVENS.

291. —*Goats and monkies!*] In this exclamation Shakspeare has shewn great art. *Iago*, in the first scene in which he endeavours to awaken his suspicion, being urged to give some evident proof of the guilt of *Cassio* and *Desdemona*, tells him it were impossible to have ocular demonstration of it, though they should be, “as prime as *goats*, as hot as *monkies*.”—These words we may suppose, still ring in the ears of *Othello*,

L

who



who being now fully convinced of his wife's infidelity, rushes out with this emphatic exclamation:—*Iago's* words were but too true—now indeed I am convinced that they are as prime as *goats*, as hot as *monkies*.

MALONE.

352. *But not your words.*] This line is added out of the first edition. POPE.

377. —*time of scorn*] The reading of both the elder quartos and the folio is,

——for *the time* of scorn.

Mr. Rowe reads—*hand* of scorn; and succeeding editors have silently followed him.

I would (though in opposition to so many great authorities in favour of the change) continue to read with the old copy,

——*the time of scorn*.

We call the *hour in which we are to die*, the *hour of death*—the time when we are to be judged—the *day of judgment*—the instant when we suffer calamity—the *moment of evil*; and why may we not distinguish the time which brings contempt along with it, by the title of *the time of scorn*? Thus, in *Soliman and Perseda*, 1599:

“So sings the mariner upon the shore,

“When he hath past the dangerous *time of storms*.”

Again, Marston's *Insatiate Countess*, 1603:

“I'll poison thee; with murder curbe thy paths,

“And make thee know a *time of infamy*!”

Othello takes this idea from a clock. *To make me* (says he) *a fixed figure* (on the dial of the world) *for the hour of scorn to point and make a full stop at!* STEEVENS.

Might



Might not Shakspeare have written—  
—for *the scorn of time*

To point his slow unmoving finger at ?  
*i. e.* the marked object for the contempt of all ages  
and all time.

So, in *Hamlet* :

“For who would bear the whips and *scorns of time* ?”

However, in support of the reading of the old copies,  
it may be observed, that our author has personified  
*scorn*, in his 88th Sonnet :

“When thou shalt be dispos’d to set me light,

“And place my merit in the *eye of scorn*.”—

The epithet *unmoving* (the folio reads—*and moving*)  
may likewise be supported by Shakspeare’s 104th Son-  
net, in which this very thought is expressed :

“Ah ? yet doth beauty, like a *dial-hand*,

“*Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived,*

“So your sweet hue, which, methinks, still doth  
stand,

“Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceiv’d.”

MALONE.

Perhaps we should read—*slowly moving finger at*. I  
should wish to reject the present reading, for even  
then the word *slow* implied some degree of motion,  
though that motion may not be perceptible to the eye.  
*The time of scorn* is a strange expression, to which, I  
cannot reconcile myself ; I have no doubt but it is  
erroneous, and wish we had authority to read *hand of*  
*scorn*, instead of *time*.

MONCK MASON.



If Atkinson, the contractor, in one of his soliloquies (after the execution of a late sentence in the corn-market) had been heard to explain :

“ ————but, alas ! to make me  
 “ A fixed figure, for the time of scorn  
 “ To point his slow unmoving finger at,—  
 “ O ! O ! ”

he would, at once, have been understood, by *the* TIME of scorn, to mean *the* HOUR of his exposure in the pillory ; and by *its* slow unmoving FINGER, *the* HOUR-INDEX of the dial that fronted him.——

Mr. Malone, in a subsequent note, hath remarked that, “ *his* for *its* is common in our author ; ” and in respect to the epithet *unmoving*, it may be observed, with Rosalind, not only that *time travels in divers paces with divers persons*, but, that for the same reason, it GALLOPS with the thief to the gallows, it apparently STANDS STILL with the perjured in the pillory — Whatever were the precise instance of disgrace to which Othello alluded, the text in its present state, is perfectly intelligible ; and, therefore, should be preserved from capricious alterations. HENLEY.

381. —garner'd up my heart ; ] That is, *treasured up*. See Matt. iii. 12. JOHNSON.

386. —Turn thy complection there, &c.] At such an object do thou, *patience*, thyself *change colour* ; at this do thou, even thou, *rosy cherub* as thou art, *look as grim as hell*. JOHNSON.

391. —O thou weed ! ] Dr. Johnson has, on this occasion, been unjustly censured for having stifled difficulties



difficulties where he could not remove them. I would therefore observe, that Othello's speech is printed word for word from the folio edition, though the quarto reads:

*O thou black weed!*

Had this epithet, *black*, been admitted, there would still have remained an incomplete verse in this speech: no additional beauty would have been introduced; but instead of it, a paltry antithesis between the words *black* and *fair*. STEEVENS.

395. *Was this fair paper, &c.*] Massinger has imitated this passage in *The Emperor of the East*:

“——can you think

“ This master-piece of heaven, this precious  
vellum

“ Of such a purity and virgin whiteness,

“ Could be design'd to have perjury and whore-  
dom

“ In capital letters writ upon't?” STEEVENS.

396. *Committed!*] This, and the three following lines, are omitted in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

This word in Shakspeare's time, besides its general signification, seems to have been applied particularly to unlawful acts of love. Hence perhaps it is so often repeated by *Othello*.—So, in Sir Thomas Overbury's *Very Woman*, 1610: She *commits* with her ears for certain; after that she may go for a maid, but she has been lain with in her understanding.” The word is used in the same sense in *King Lear*: *Commit* not with man's sworn spouse.”



Again, in Decker's *Honest Whore*, first Part :

“ —if all *committers* stood in a rank,  
 “ They'd make a lane in which your shame might  
 dwell.” MALONE.

408. *If to preserve this vessel for my lord.*] This expression, as well as many others, our author has borrowed from the sacred writings :—“ to possess his *vessel* in sanctification,”—1 Thess. iv. 4. MALONE.

409. —*any other,*] Thus the folio. The quarto reads—*any bated.* STEEVENS.

428. *Who is thy lord ?*] This, and the following speech, are omitted in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

438. *The small'st opinion on my least misuse.*] The old quarto reads :

*The small'st opinion on my great'st abuse.*

Which I think is better. JOHNSON.

452. —*such terms upon his callet.*] This word is of great antiquity in the English language. Chaucer has it in his *Remedy of Love* :

“ C, for calet, for of, we have O,  
 “ L, for leude, D, for demeanure,” &c.

PERCY.

I meet this word in *The Translation of Ariosto*, 1591 :

“ And thus this old ill-favour'd spitefull *callet*”—  
 Harrington, in a note on that line, says that “ *callet* is a nick-name used to a woman,” and that “ in Irish it signifies a *witch*.” MALONE.

473. —*notoroius*—] For *gross*, not in its proper meaning for *known*. JOHNSON.

474.



474. —*such* companions] *Companion*, in the time of Shakspeare was used as a word of contempt in the same sense as *fellow* is at this day. MALONE.

478. *Speak within door.*] Do not clamour so as to be heard beyond the house. JOHNSON.

480. —*the seamy side without:*] That is, *inside out*. JOHNSON.

This idea has already occurred. Iago speaks of Roderigo as of one,

Whom love hath turn'd almost the wrong side outward. STEEVENS.

486. *Here I kneel, &c.*] The first quarto omits the rest of this speech. STEEVENS.

488. *Either in discourse, or thought,*] The folio reads—discourse of thought—and perhaps rightly. See Milton, *P. L.* b. v. l. 488. STEEVENS.

502. —*chide with you.*] This line is from the quarto, 1622. STEEVENS.

506. *And the great messengers of Venice stay;*] Thus the quarto. The folio reads:

*The messengers of Venice stay the meat.*

STEEVENS.

526. —*and acquaintance;*—] Thus the folio. The quarto reads—*and acquittance*. STEEVENS.

580. —*and the night grows to waste:*] I suppose Iago means to say, that *it is near midnight*. Perhaps we ought to read *waist*. The folio reads—*wast*, as it does in the following line in *Hamlet*:

“In the dead *wast* and *middle* of the night.”



So also, in the *Puritan*, a comedy, 1607 :

“ ————— ere the day

“ Be spent to the *girdle*, thou shalt be free.”

The words however may only mean—*the night is wasting apace*. MALONE.

612. —and he, she lov'd, prov'd mad,

And did forsake her.—] We should read :

—and he, she lov'd, forsook her,

And she prov'd mad.

WARBURTON.

I believe that *mad* only signifies *wild, frantick, uncertain*.

JOHNSON.

We still call a wild girl a *mad-cap*: and in the first Part of *King Henry VI.* are mentioned :

“ *Mad*, natural graces that extinguish art.”

Again, in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* :

“ Come on, you *mad-cap*.”

Again, in *Love's Labour Lost* : “ Do you hear, my *mad* wenches ?”

STEEVENS.

617. —I've much ado,

But to go hang my head—] I have much ado to

do any thing but hang my head. We might read :

Not to go hang my head.

This is perhaps the only insertion made in the latter editions which has improved the play. The rest seem to have been added for the sake of amplification, or of ornament. When the imagination had subsided, and the mind was no longer agitated by the horror of the action, it became at leisure to look round for specious additions. This addition is natural. Desdemona can at first hardly forbear to sing the song ; she endeavours



endeavours to change her train of thoughts, but her imagination at last prevails, and she sings it.

JOHNSON.

From *I have much to do, to Nay, that's not next*, was inserted after the first edition, as likewise the remaining part of the song.

626. *The poor soul, &c.*] This song, in two parts, is printed in a late collection of old ballads; the lines preserved here differ somewhat from the copy discovered by the ingenious collector. JOHNSON.

626. —*sat singing*—] Thus the old copies: but the song as published by Dr. Percy, in the first volume of his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, reads—“*sat sighing.*” STEEVENS.

641. *I call'd my love false love;—*] This couplet is not in the ballad, which is the complaint, not of a woman forsaken, but of a man rejected. These lines were properly added when it was accommodated to a woman. JOHNSON.

643. —*you'll couch with more men.*] This verb is found also in *The Two noble Kinsmen*, 1634:

“——O, if thou couch

“But one night with her——” MALONE.

647. *I have heard it said so.*] This, as well as the following speech, is omitted in the first quarto.

STEEVENS.

676. —*to the 'vantage,*] i. e. to boot, over and above.

STEEVENS.

678. *But I do think, &c.*] The remaining part of this speech is omitted in the first quarto. STEEVENS.



683. —*our former having*—] Our former allowance of expence. JOHNSON.

696. —*heaven me such uses send*,] Such is the reading of the folio, and of the subsequent editions; but the old quarto has :

—————*such usage send*.—————

*Usage* is an old word for *custom*, and, I think, better than *uses*. JOHNSON.

### ACT V.

Line 11. *I'VE* rubb'd this young quat almost to the sense,

*And he grows angry.*] A *quat*, in the midland counties, is a *pimple*, which by rubbing is made to smart, or is *rubbed to sense*. Roderigo is called a *quat* by the same mode of speech, as a low fellow is now termed in low language a *scab*. *To rub to the sense*, is *to rub to the quick*. JOHNSON.

So, in *The Devil's Law-Case*, 1623: "O young *quat*! incontinence is plagued in all creatures in the world."

Again, in Decker's *Gul's Hornbook*, 1609: "—whether he be a *yong quat* of the first yeers revennew, or some austere and sullen-fac'd steward," &c.

Such another thought occurs in Ben Jonson's *Catiline* :

" —must



“— must have their disgraces still new *rub'd*,  
 “ To make them smart,” &c. STEEVENS.

14. —*my gain*:] The quartos read—*my game*.  
 STEEVENS.

36. *And your fate hies apace*:] Thus the first quarto.  
 The second quarto and the folio read—“ And your  
 “ *unblest fate hies*.” STEEVENS.

37. *Forth of my heart*, &c.] Thus the first quarto.  
 The folio reads, “ *For of*:” perhaps the true reading  
 For *off*, &c.

But Mr. Whalley observes to me, that the reading  
 of the quarto may be the true one. *Forth* signifies  
 both *out* and *from*. So in *Hamlet*:

“ *Forth* at your eyes your spirits wildly peep.”

Again, in Jonson's *Volpone*:

“ *Forth* the resolved corners of his eyes.”

Mr. Henley had also made the same observation,  
 and in proof of it produced the following passages.  
 Richard III.

“ I clothe my naked villany

“ With old odd ends, stol'n *forth* of holy writ.”

Again,

“ Humphrey Hoare that called upon your grace,

“ To breakfast once *forth* of my company.

REED.

39. —*no passage*?] No passengers? nobody going  
 by? JOHNSON.

So, in the *Comedy of Errors*:

“ Now in the stirring *passage* of the day.”

STEEVENS.



44. —*a heavy night* ;] *A thick cloudy night*, in which an ambush may be commodiously laid. JOHNSON.

So, in *Measure for Measure*:

“Upon the *heavy* middle of the night.”

STEEVENS.

89. *Lend me a garter, &c.*] This speech is omitted in the first quarto. STEEVENS.

96. *Alas! my friend, my dear countryman!*] This passage incontestably proves that Iago was meant for a *Venetian*. STEEVENS.

114. —*good gentlemen.*] Thus the folio. The quartos read, *gentlewoman*. STEEVENS.

115. —*the ghastness,*] So the folio. The quartos read, *jestures*. STEEVENS.

116. *Nay, if you stare,*] So the folio. The quartos read, *stirre*. STEEVENS.

139. —*or fordoes me quite.*] To *for*do, is to undo, to ruin, to destroy. See *Midsummer Night's Dream*, act v. line 374. and note. STEEVENS.

140. *It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul—*

*Let me not name it—*] The abruptness of this soliloquy makes it obscure. The meaning, I think, is this: “I am here (says Othello in his mind) overwhelmed with horror. What is the reason of this perturbation? Is it want of resolution to do justice? Is it the dread of shedding blood? No; it is not the action that shocks me, but *it is the cause, it is the cause, my soul; let me not name it to you, ye chaste stars! it is the cause!*”

JOHNSON.

Othello,



Othello, full of horror at the cruel action which he is about to perpetrate, seems at this instant to be seeking his justification, from representing to himself *the cause*, i. e. the greatness of the provocation he had received.

STEEVENS.

145. *Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.*]

This is the second attempt of Othello to justify what he has undertaken. First, he says, *It is the cause*; i. e. his own *cause*; now he is willing to suppose himself the preventer to succeeding mischief to others.

STEEVENS.

146. *Put out the light, and then—Put out the light!]*

So it should be printed. The meaning is, I will put out the light, and *then* proceed to the execution of my purpose. But the expression of *putting out the light*, bringing to mind the effects of the extinction of the light of life, he breaks short, and questions himself about the effects of this metaphorical extinction, introduced by a repetition of his first words, as much as to say, but hold, let me first weigh the reflections which this expression so naturally excites.

WARBURTON.

This has been considered as a very difficult line. *Fielding* makes *Betterton* and *Booth* dispute about it with the *author himself* in the other world. The punctuation recommended by Dr. Warburton, gives a spirit to it which I fear was not intended. It seems to have been only a *play upon words*. *To put the light out* was a phrase for *to kill*. In the *Maid's* tragedy, *Melantius* says,

M

—'Tis



——'Tis a justice, and a noble one,  
 “*To put the light out of such base offenders.*”

FARMER.

*Put out the light.* This phrase is twice used in *Sidney's Arcadia* for killing a lady, p. 460 and 470. edition 1633.

Again, in an unpublished play, called *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, by George Chapman, licensed by Sir George Buc, October 31, 1611:

“——O soul of cunning!  
 “Came that arch subtilty from thy lady's counsel,  
 “Or thine own sudden craft? confess to me  
 “How oft thou hast been a bawd to their close  
 actions,

“*Or all thy light goes out.*” STEEVENS.

149. —*put out thy light,*] Thus the folio. The quarto reads—*put out thine.* STEEVENS.

150. *Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,*] So in *Palmerin D'Oliua*, 1588, p. 1 “——those that beheld her esteemed her for the chiefest piece of workmanship that ever nature framed.” REED.

152. —*relumine.*] The folio reads—*relume.* The first quarto—*return*: the second quarto—*relumine.*

STEEVENS.

—*thy rose,*] Thus the folio. The quarto reads,  
 “——the rose.”

Again, the quarto reads,

“*I'll smell it on the tree.*” STEEVENS.

The folio,

“*I'll smell thee on the tree.*” STEEVENS.

160.



160. — *This sorrow's heavenly ;*] This tenderness, with which I lament the punishment which justice compels me to inflict, is a holy passion.

I wish these two lines could be honestly ejected. It is the fate of Shakspeare to counteract his own pathos.

JOHNSON.

Perhaps the poet would not have retained both these images had he published the play himself, though in the hurry of composition he threw them both upon paper. The first seems adopted from the fabulous history of the crocodile, the second from a passage in the scripture.

STEEVENS.

172. *I would not kill thy soul.*] Sir W. D'Avenant has borrowed this thought in his *Albovine King of Lombardy*, 1629 :

“ I am not fraught with devil's spleen ; I would

“ Not hurt *thy soul*.”

STEEVENS.

215. *A murder, which I thought a sacrifice.*] This line is difficult. *Thou hast hardened my heart, and makest me* kill thee with the rage of a murderer, when *I thought to have sacrificed* thee to justice with the calmness of a priest striking a victim.

It must not be omitted, that one of the elder quartos reads, *thou dost stone thy heart* ; which I suspect to be genuine. The meaning then will be, *thou forcest me* to dismiss thee from the world in the state of the murdered without preparation for death, *when I intended* that thy punishment should have been a sacrifice atoning for thy crime.

M i j

I am



I am glad that I have ended my revisal of this dreadful scene. It is not to be endured. JOHNSON.

227. —*hath ta'en order for't.*] i. e. has *taken measures*. So, in Holinshed's *Reign of King John*: “—he *took* such *order* for him, that he was despoiled of all his goods and benefices,” p. 174. STEEVENS.

Again, in *Dido Queen of Carthage*, by Marlowe and Nashe, 1594:

“I will *take order* for that presently.”

MALONE.

229. *Had all his hairs been lives,—*] This thought appears to have been very common, as it occurs frequently in dramattick performances prior to Shakspeare's *Othello*. STEEVENS.

238. *Being done,*  
*There is no pause.*] The first quarto omits this speech. STEEVENS.

241. *It is too late.*] After this speech of *Othello*, the elder quarto adds an invocation from *Desdemona*, consisting only of the sacred name, thrice repeated. As this must be supposed to have been uttered while she is yet struggling with death, I think an editor may be excused from inserting such a circumstance of supererogatory horror, especially as it is found in but one of the ancient copies.

This alteration was probably made in consequence of the statute of the 3d of James I. c. 21. which lays a penalty for the profane use of the name of God, &c. in stage plays, interludes, May-games, &c.

TOLLET.

The



The statute was necessary ; for not only the ancient moralities, but the plays (those of *Chapman* in particular) abound with the most wanton and shocking repetitions of a name which never ought to be mentioned in such an irreverent manner on the stage.

STEEVENS.

256. *My wife! my wife! what wife?—I have no wife:]* “*Filium unicum adolescentulum habeo: ah! quid dixi habere me? imo habui, Chreme.*” *Ter. Heautont.*

STEEVENS.

279. *O falsely, falsely murder'd!*] It cannot be supposed that a person who had been effectually *strangled* or *smothered*, could speak again; for if the power of breathing returned after the instrument of suffocation was removed, no act of violence had in reality taken place by which the conclusion of life could be brought on. But such is the peculiar fate of *Desdemona*, that she is supposed to be smothered, revives to acquaint us that *she smothered herself*, and then dies without any ostensible cause of death. I am of opinion that some theatrical direction has been omitted; and that when *Othello* says :

Not dead! not yet quite dead!

I, that am cruel, am yet merciful;

I would not have thee linger in thy pain:—

So, so.

He then stabs her, repeating the two last words as he repeats the blow. Thus *Virgil* :

“——*sic, sic, juvat ire sub umbras.*”

M i i j

After



After the repetition of wounds, Desdemona might speak again, with propriety, and yet very soon expire ; as says Cassio of Roderigo :

——even but now he spake,

After long seeming dead.

The first resolution of Othello was to poison her ; but from this measure he is dissuaded by the policy of Iago. He is next determined to use the poinard ; but, his tenderness awaking, he cannot bear to deform those beauties which he had so often approached with other sensations, and for different purposes. Therefore, says he :

——I'll not shed her blood,

Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,

And smooth as monumental alabaster :

And this resolution we are to imagine he would have kept, but that he was averse to employing those means again, which had already appeared to be uncertain in their effect.

If this apparent want of a play-house direction had occasioned any absurdity in the original representation of the play, probably it is glanced at by Ben Jonson in the *Alchemist*, act v. “ Did'st hear a cry, said'st thou? Yes, sir, like unto a man that had been *strangled* an hour, and could not speak.” STEEVENS.

298. *She turn'd to folly, and she was a whore.*] Goldsmith hath used the word precisely in the same sense :

When lovely woman stoops to *folly*,

And finds too late that men betray,

What charm can sooth her melancholy,

What art can wash her guilt away ? HENLEY.



300. —*false as water.*] As water that will support no weight, nor keep any impression. JOHNSON.

315. —*that told me first ;*] The folio reads, “—that told me *on her* first.” STEEVENS.

319. *iteration*—] The folio reads—*iterance*.

STEEVENS.

321. *Æmil.*] The first quarto omits this and the following speech. STEEVENS.

—*villany has made mocks with love!*] *Villany* has taken advantage to *play upon* the weakness of a violent passion. JOHNSON.

334. *Thou hast not half that power to do me harm, As I have to be hurt.*—] She means to say, *I have in this cause power to endure more than thou hast power to inflict.* JOHNSON.

356. —*charm your tongue.*] By this expression, *Charm your tongue*, the poet meant no more than to make Iago say, Apply some power, strong as *a charm* would be, to your tongue; for nothing less can stop its volubility. So, *Henry VI.* Part III.

“Peace, wilful boy, or I will *charm your tongue.*”

And, Ben Jonson, in *Cynthia's Revels* :

“—*charm your skipping tongue.*”

Pliny informs us, that *favete linguis* was the constant exclamation before any religious *charm* was applied. From this circumstance the phrase to *charm* a tongue might have originated. STEEVENS.

357. —*my mistress, &c.*] This line and the following six speeches in this edition, are wanting in the first quarto. STEEVENS.



387. *A thousand times committed :—*] This is a second passage which seems to suppose a longer space comprised in the action of this play than the scenes include.

JOHNSON.

*That she with Cassio had the act of shame  
A thousand times committed.—*

And again :

*'Tis not a year or two shews us a man.*] I am not convinced from these passages only, that a longer space is comprised in the action of this play than the scenes include.

What Othello mentions in the first instance, might have passed still more often, before they were married, when Cassio went between them ; for she, who could find means to elude the vigilance of her father in respect of Othello, might have done so in respect of Cassio, when there was time enough for the occurrence supposed to have happened. A jealous person will aggravate all he thinks, or speaks of ; and might use a *thousand* for a much less number, only to give weight to his censure : nor would it have answered any purpose to have made Othello a little nearer or further off from truth in his calculation. We might apply the poet's own words in *Cymbeline* :

“ —spare your arithmetick ;

“ Once, and a million.”

The latter is a proverbial expression, and might have been introduced with propriety, had they been married only a day or two. Æmilia's reply perhaps was dictated by her own private experience ; and seems to mean



mean only, "that it is too soon to judge of a husband's  
" disposition; or that Desdemona must not be sur-  
" prised at the discovery of Othello's jealousy, for it  
" is not even a year or two that will display all the  
" failings of a man."

Mr. Tollet, however, on this occasion has produced several instances in support of Dr. Johnson's opinion; and as I am unable to explain them in favour of my own supposition, I shall lay them before the publick.

Act iii. line 443, Othello says:

What sense had I of her stolen hours of lust?

I saw it not, thought it not, it harm'd not me:

*I slept the next night well*, was free and merry:

I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips.

On *Othello's* wedding night he and Cassio embarked from Venice, where *Desdemona* was left under the care of *Iago*. They all meet at Cyprus; and since their arrival there, the scenes include only one night, the night of the celebration of their nuptials. *Iago* had not then infused any jealousy into *Othello's* mind, nor did he suspect any former intimacy between *Cassio* and *Desdemona*, but only thought it "apt and of great credit that she loved him." What night then was there to intervene between *Cassio's* kisses and *Othello's* sleeping the next night well? *Iago* has said, "I lay with *Cassio* lately," which he could not have done, unless they had been longer at *Cyprus* than is represented in the play; nor could *Cassio* have kept away, for the space of a whole week, from *Bianca*.

STEEVENS.



391. *It was an handkerchief, &c.*] Othello tells his wife, act iii. line 658 :

——that handkerchief

*Did an Egyptian to my mother give.*

And here he says :

*It was an handkerchief——*

*My father gave my mother.*

This last passage has been censured as an oversight in the poet: but perhaps it exhibits only a fresh proof of his art. The first account of the handkerchief, as given by Othello, was purposely ostentatious, in order to alarm his wife the more. When he mentions it a second time, the truth was sufficient for his purpose.

This circumstance of the handkerchief is perhaps ridiculed by Ben Jonson, in his *Poetaster*—“you shall see me do *the Moor*; master, lend me your *scarf*.”

STEEVENS.

I question, whether *Othello* was written early enough to be ridiculed by the *Poetaster*. There were many other *Moors* on the stage.

It is certain at least, that the passage,

“Our new heraldry is *hands*, not *hearts*.”

could not be inserted before the middle of the year 1611.

FARMER.

If the allusion in the *Poetaster* (which was printed in 1601) were to *Othello*, it would fix its date much earlier than I conceive it to have been written.—But the allusion in the passage quoted, is not to *Othello*, but to an old play called the *Battle of Alcazar*, 1594.—

In



In the *Poetaster*, Pyrgus, who says, you “shall see me do the *Moor*,” proceeds in the same scene, and repeats an absurd speech of the *Moor*’s in the *Battle of Alcazar*, beginning with this line :

“Where art thou, boy ? where is Calipolis ?”  
which ascertains the allusion to be to that play.

MALONE.

396. —*as the north* ;] The old quarto reads,  
*I’ll be in speaking liberal as the air.*

*Liberal*, is free, under no controul. This quality of North-wind is mentioned in *Victoria Corombona*, &c. 1612 :

“And let th’ *irregular* North-wind sweep her up.”

Again, in *Jeronimo*, i. e. the first part of the *Spanish Tragedy*, 1605 :

“Now let your bloods be *liberal* as the sea.”

STEEVENS.

415. *Are there no stones in heaven*

But what serve for *the thunder* ?——] Shakspeare might mean, does heaven reserve its thunder only to make a noise ? has it no implements of mischief to punish as well as terrify ?

“——quum fulmina torques

“Necquicquam horremus ? cæcique in nubibus  
ignes

“Terrificant animos, et inania murmura miscent ?”

STEEVENS.

431. *And die in music*, &c.] This, and the two former lines of the speech, are wanting in the first quarto.

STEEVENS.



436. —*the ice-brook's temper*;] In the first edition it is *Isebrooke's temper*. Thence corrupted to *Ice-brook's*.—*Ebro's temper*; the waters of that river of Spain are particularly famous for tempering of steel. The finest arms in the world are the Catalonian fuses.

POPE.

I believe the old reading changed to *ice-brook* is right. Steel is hardened by being put red hot into very cold water.

JOHNSON.

The particular name of the *ice-brook* may be determined by the following passages in Martial. It was undoubtedly the *brook* or *rivulet* called *Salo* (now *Xalon*), near *Bilbilis* in *Celtiberia*. In this the Spaniards plunged all their swords and other weapons while hot from the forge; and to the *icy* quality of the waters, they were indebted for their stubborn temper:

“ Sævo Bilbilin optimam metallo  
 “ Et ferro Plateam suo sonantem,  
 “ Quam fluctu tenui sed inquieto  
 “ Armorum-Salo temperator ambit.”

Again,

“ Quibus remissum corpus astringes brevi,  
 “ Salone, qui ferrum gelat.”

Again,

“ Pugio, quem curvis signat brevis orbita  
 venis,

“ Stridentem gelidis hunc Salo tinxit aquis.”

Again, in *Justin*, l. 44. “ Præcipua his quidem ferri materia, sed aqua ipsa ferro violentior; quippe temperamento



ramento ejus ferrum acrius redditur ; nec ullum apud eos telum probatur quod non aut in *Bilbili* fluvio aut Chalybe tingatur. Unde etiam Chalybes fluvii hujus finitimi appellati, ferroque cæteris præstare dicuntur.”

These parts of Spain have been at all times famous for the temper of their arms. STEEVENS.

I incline to read,

It is a sword of Spain, 'tis *ebroes* temper.

If we suppose that the words ['tis *ebroes*] were huddled together either in transcribing or composing, thus ['tisebroes] the compositor in running it over with his eye, might (to make it sense as he thought) add a couple of letters, and divide the words thus (*th'ise-broes*), which is nearly as it stands in the old quarto.

I doubt whether *ice-brooks* are usual in the climate of Spain. BLACKSTONE.

456. —*O ill-starr'd wench!*] This and the six preceding lines, are omitted in the first quarto. *Wench* originally signified only a young woman. *Cassandra*, in Whetstone's *Promos*, &c. 1578, says of herself;

“ Oh wretched *wench*, where may I first com-  
playne ?”

Again,

“ Therefore, sweet *wenche*, helpe me to rue my  
woe.”

The word is used without any dishonourable meaning in the Bible.

“ And a *wench* told him,” &c.

And again, by Gavin Douglas, in his version of the *Æneid* :

N

“ —audetque



“—audetque viris concurrere *virgo*.”

“This *wensche* stoutlye rencounter durst with men.” STEEVENS.

470. —*towards his feet*;] To see if, according to the common opinion, his feet be cloven. JOHNSON.

475. *For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.*] The same thought has already occurred in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“—’Tis well thou’rt gone—

“If it be well to live. STEEVENS.

477. —*in the practice*—] In the *snare*, by the stratagem. JOHNSON.

505. —*in the interim*] The first copy has, *in the nick*. It was, I suppose, thought upon revisal, that *nick* was too familiar. JOHNSON.

533. *Speak of me as I am*;—] The first quarto reads, *Speak of them as they are*. The present reading, which is the reading of the folio, has more force. JOHNSON.

537. —*of one, whose hand,*

*Like the base Indian threw a pearl away*

*Richer than all his tribe*;—] I have restored *Judian*, from the elder quarto, as the genuine and more eligible reading. Mr. Pope thinks this was occasioned probably by the word *tribe* just after: I have many reasons to oppose this opinion. In the first place, the most ignorant Indian, I believe, is so far the reverse of the *dung-hill-cock* in the *fable*, as to know the estimation of a pearl beyond that of a barley-corn: so that, in that respect, the thought itself would not be just. Then, if our author had designed  
to



to reflect on the *ignorance* of the Indian without any farther reproach, he would have called him *rude*, and not *base*. Again, I am persuaded, as my friend Mr. Warburton long ago observed, the phrase is not here *literal*, but *metaphorical*: and, by his *pearl*, our author very properly means *a fine woman*. But Mr. Pope objects farther to the reading *Judian*, because, to make sense of this, we must pre-suppose some particular story of a Jew alluded to; which is much less obvious: but has Shakspeare never done this but in this single instance? I am satisfied, in his *Judian*, he is alluding to Herod; who, in a fit of blind jealousy, threw away such a jewel of a wife as Mariamne was to him. What can be more parallel in circumstance, than the conduct of Herod and Othello? Nor was the story so little obvious as Mr. Pope seems to imagine: for, in the year 1613, the lady Elizabeth Carew published a tragedy called *MARIAM, the Fair Queen of JEWRY*. I shall only add, that our author might write *Judian*, or *Judean* (if that should be alleged as any objection), instead of *Judæan*, with the same licence and change of accent, as, in his *Antony and Cleopatra*, he shortens the second syllable of Euphrates in pronunciation: which was a liberty likewise taken by Spenser, of whom our author was a studious imitator.

THEOBALD.

*Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away]* The elder quarto reads *Judian*, and this is certainly right. And by the *Judian* is meant Herod, whose usage to Mariamne is so apposite to the speaker's case, that a



more proper instance could not be thought of. Besides, he was the subject of a tragedy at that time, as appears from the words in Hamlet, where an ill player is described,

“ —to out-herod Herod.”

The metaphorical term of a *pearl* for a fine woman, is so common as scarce to need examples.

WARBURTON.

I cannot join with the learned criticks in conceiving this passage to refer either to the ignorance of the natives of India, in respect of *pearls*, or the well-known story of Herod and Mariamne. The poet might just as fairly be supposed to have alluded to that of Jephthah and his daughter.

Othello, in detestation of what he had done, seems to compare himself to another person who had thrown away a *thing of value*, with some circumstances of the *meanest villany*, which the epithet *base* seems to imply in its general sense, though it is sometimes used only for *low* or *mean*. The Indian could not properly be termed *base* in the former and most common sense, whose fault was *ignorance*, which brings its own excuse with it; and the crime of Herod surely deserves a more aggravated distinction. For though in every crime, great as well as small, there is a degree of baseness, yet the *furiis agitated amor*, such as contributed to that of Herod, seems to ask a stronger word to characterize it; as there was *spirit* at least in what he did, though the spirit of a fiend, and the epithet *base* would better suit with *petty larceny* than *royal guilt*.



*guilt.* Besides, the simile appears to me too apposite almost to be used on the occasion, and is little more than bringing the fact into comparison with itself. Each through jealousy had destroyed an innocent wife, circumstances so parallel, as hardly to admit of that variety which we generally find in one allusion, which is meant to illustrate another, and at the same time to appear as more than a superfluous ornament. Neither do I believe the poet intended to make the present simile coincide with all the circumstances of Othello's situation, but merely with the single act of having *Easily* (as he himself terms it) destroyed that on which he ought to have set a greater value. As the *pearl* may bear a *literal* as well as a *metaphorical* sense, I would rather choose to take it in the *literal* one, and receive Mr. Pope's rejected explanation, *pre-supposing some story of a Jew alluded to*, which might be well understood at that time, though now perhaps forgotten, or at least imperfectly remembered. I have read in some book, as ancient as the time of Shakspeare, the following tale ; though, at present, I am unable either to recollect the title of the piece, or the author's name.

A Jew, who had been prisoner for many years in distant parts, brought with him, at his return to Venice, a great number of pearls, which he offered on the 'change among the merchants, and (one alone excepted) disposed of them to his satisfaction. On this pearl, which was the largest ever shewn at market, he had fixed an immoderate price, nor could be

N i i j

persuaded



persuaded to make the least abatement. Many of the magnificos, as well as traders, offered him considerable sums for it ; but he was resolute in his first demand. At last, after repeated and unsuccessful applications to individuals, he assembled the merchants of the city, by proclamation, to meet him on the Rialto, where he once more exposed it to sale on the former terms, but to no purpose. After having expatiated, for the last time, on the singular beauty and value of it, he threw it suddenly into the sea before them all. Though this anecdote may appear inconsistent with the avarice of a Jew, yet it sufficiently agrees with the spirit so remarkable at all times in the scattered remains of that vindictive nation.

Shakspeare's seeming aversion to the Jews in general, and his constant desire to expose their *avarice* and *baseness* as often as he had an opportunity, may serve to strengthen my supposition ; and as that nation, in his time, and since, has not been famous for crimes *daring* and *conspicuous*, but has rather contented itself to thrive by the meaner and more successful arts of *baseness*, there seems to be a particular propriety in the epithet. When Falstaff is justifying himself in *Henry IV.* he adds, " If what I have said be not true, " I am a Jew, an Ebrew Jew," *i. e.* one of the most suspected characters of the time. The liver of a Jew is an ingredient in the cauldron of Macbeth ; and the vigilance for gain, which is described in Shylock, may afford us reason to suppose the poet was alluding to a story like that already quoted.

*Richer*



*Richer than all his tribe*, seems to point out the Jew again in a mercantile light; and may mean, that *the pearl was richer than all the gems to be found among a set of men generally trading in them*. Neither do I recollect that Othello mentions many things, but what he might fairly have been allowed to have had knowledge of in the course of his peregrinations. Of this kind are the similes of the Euxine sea flowing into the Propontick, and the Arabian trees dropping their gums. The rest of his speeches are more free from mythological and historical allusions, than almost any to be found in Shakspeare, for he is never quite clear from them; though in the design of this character he seems to have meant it for one who had spent a greater part of his life in the field, than in the cultivation of any other knowledge than what would be of use to him in his military capacity. It should be observed, that most of the flourishes merely ornamental were added after the first edition; and this is not the only proof to be met with, that the poet in his alterations sometimes forgot his original plan.

The metaphorical term of *a pearl* for *a fine woman*, may, for aught I know, be very common; but in the instances Dr. Warburton has brought to prove it so, there are found circumstances that immediately shew a woman to have been meant. So, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

“HER BED IS INDIA, there SHE lies a *pearl*.”

“Why SHE is a *pearl* whose price hath launch’d,”

&c.

In



In Othello's speech we find no such leading expression ; and are therefore at liberty, I think, to take the passage in its *literal* meaning.

Either we are partial to discoveries which we make for ourselves, or the spirit of controversy is contagious ; for it usually happens that each possessor of an ancient copy of our author is led to assert the superiority of all such readings as have not been exhibited in the notes, or received into the text of the last edition. On this account, our present republication (and more especially in the celebrated plays) affords a greater number of these diversities than were ever before obtruded on the publick. A time however may arrive, when a complete body of variations being printed, our readers may luxuriate in an ample feast of *thats* and *whiches* ; and thenceforward it may be prophesied, that all will unite in a wish that the selection had been made by an editor, rather than submitted to their own labour and sagacity.

To this note should be subjoined [as an apology for many others which may not be thought to bring conviction with them] that the true sense of a passage has frequently remained undetermined, till repeated experiments have been tried on it ; when one commentator, making a proper use of the errors of another, has at last explained it to universal satisfaction. When mistakes have such effects, who would regret having been mistaken, or be sorry to prove the means of directing others, by that affinity which a wrong reading or intepretation sometimes has to the right, though he has not been so lucky as to produce  
at



at once authorities which could not be questioned, or decisions to which nothing could be added ?

STEEVENS.

I abide by the old text, "the base *Judian*." Shakspeare seems to allude to *Herod* in the play of *Mariamne* :

"I had but one inestimable *Jewel*——

"Yet I in suddaine choler cast it downe,

"And dasht it all to pieces."——

FARMER.

Mr. Theobald is often unfaithful in his account of the ancient copies. He says, he has restored *Judean* from the elder quarto; but both the quartos read—*Indian*, as does the second folio. *Judean* is found only in the folio, 1623. In the MS. of that age *n* is scarcely distinguishable from *u*, and they who are conversant with the press well know, that if by negligence a dot is omitted over *i*, a compositor always considers it as an *e*. Hence probably the mistake in the first folio. It is surely no trivial objection to the reading *Judean*, that *there is no such word*. The country is Judæa, or Judéa, and the derivative must be Judéan. For these reasons, I believe *Indian* to have been our author's word. *His tribe* perhaps does not refer either to *Judéan* or *Indian*, but to the pearl: *A pearl richer than* the whole class of pearls. *His* for *its* is common in our author.

Whether we understand pearl in its primitive or figurative sence, I strongly incline to read *Indian*, because, I think, the pearl would naturally bring the  
people



people of the East to Shakspeare's mind ; the connexion in his time being considered so strong, that a contemporary author has distinguished the inhabitants of *India* by an epithet founded on the circumstance of their abounding in pearls :

“ ———where the bright sun with his neighbour  
beams

“ Doth early light the *pearled Indians*.”

*Cornelia*, a tragedy by T. Kyd, 1594.

MALONE.

544. *Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk*] I am told that it is immediate death for a Christian to strike a Turk in Aleppo. Othello is boasting of his own audacity.

ANON.

551. *Killing myself to die upon a kiss.*] So, in the Second Part of Marlow's *Tamburlaine*, 1590 :

“ Yet let me kiss my lord before I dye,

“ And let me dye with kissing of my lord.”

STEEVENS.

554. *O Spartan dog !*] The dogs of Spartan race were reckoned among those of the most fierce and savage kind.

HANMER.

They are again mentioned in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* :

“ When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear

“ With *hounds of Sparta*.”

HENLEY.

560. ———*To you, lord governor,*

*Remains the censure of this hellish villain ;*]

Rymer, who had neither vigour of imagination to make a poet, nor strength of judgment to make a critick,



critick, as appears from his *Edgar*, and his *Remarks on Shakspeare*, had yet just enough to play the buffoon and caviller. His criticism on the *Poets of the last age*, with only a mixture of trite remarks, transcribed from the French commentators on *Aristotle*, are one continued heap of ignorance and insolence. Almost the only remark on Shakspeare, which, I think, deserves an answer, is upon Iago's character, which he thus censures. *To entertain the audience (says he) with something new and surprising, against common sense and nature, he would pass upon us a close, dissembling, false, ungrateful rascal, instead of an open-hearted, frank, plain-dealing soldier, a character constantly worn by them for some thousands of years in the world.* This hath the appearance of sense, being founded on that rule of *Nature and Aristotle*, that each character should have manners convenient to the age, sex, and condition.

*Ætatis cujusque notandi sunt tibi mores, &c.*

says Horace. But how has our critick applied it? According to this rule it is confessed, that a soldier should be brave, generous, and a man of honour. This is to be his dramattick character. But either *one* or *more* of any order may be brought in. If only one, then the character of the order takes its denomination from the manners of that *one*. Had therefore the only soldier in this play been Iago, the rule had been transgressed, and Rymer's censure well founded: for then this *eternal villain* must have given the character of the soldiery; which had been unjust and unnatural. But if a *number* of the same order be represented,



presented, then the character of the order is taken from the manners of the majority ; and this according to nature and common sense. Now in this play there are many of the order of the soldiery ; and all, excepting Iago, represented as open, generous, and brave. From *these* the soldier's character is to be taken ; and not from Iago, who is brought as an exception to it : unless it be unnatural to suppose there could be an exception ; or that a villain ever insinuated himself into that corps. And thus Shakspeare stands clear of this impertinent criticism.

WARBURTON.

561. —*the censure*] i. e. the sentence. STEEVENS.

THE END.





1  
ANNOTATIONS

BY

SAM. JOHNSON & GEO. STEEVENS,

AND

THE VARIOUS COMMENTATORS,

UPON

*KING LEAR,*

WRITTEN BY

WILL. SHAKSPERE.

---

---

———*SIC ITUR AD ASTRA.*

VIRG.

---

---

LONDON:

*Printed for, and under the Direction of,*

JOHN BELL, British-Library, STRAND,

Bookseller to His Royal Highness the PRINCE of WALES.

M DCC LXXXVII.









ANNOTATIONS  
UPON  
KING LEAR.

---

ACT I.

*Line 4. IN the division of the kingdom—*] There is something of obscurity or inaccuracy in this preparatory scene. The king has already divided his kingdom, and yet when he enters he examines his daughters, to discover in what proportions he should divide it. Perhaps Kent and Gloster only were privy to his design, which he still kept in his own hands, to be changed or performed as subsequent reasons should determine him. JOHNSON.

6. —*that curiosity in neither—*] Curiosity is scrupulousness, or captiousness. So, in the *Taming of a Shrew*, act iv. line 569.

“For curious I cannot be with you.” STEEVENS.



8. ———*make choice of either's moiety.*] The strict sense of the word *moiety* is *half, one of two equal parts*; but Shakspeare commonly uses it for *any part or division*.

Methinks my *moiety* north from Burton here,  
In quantity equals not one of yours:  
and here the *division* was into *three* parts. STEEVENS.

19. ———*some year elder than this*——] *Some year*, is an expression used when we speak *indefinitely*.

STEEVENS.

35. ———*express our darker purpose.*] *We shall express our darker purpose*: that is, we have already made known in some measure our desire of parting the kingdom; we will now discover what has not been told before, the reasons by which we shall regulate the partition. This interpretation will justify or palliate the exordial dialogue. JOHNSON.

38. ———*from our age*;] The quartos read—*off our state*. STEEVENS.

39. Conferring *them on younger* strengths,] is the reading of the folio; the quartos read, *Confirming them on younger years*. STEEVENS.

———*while we, &c.*] From *while we*, down to *prevented now*, is omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

43. ———*constant will*] *Constant* is *firm, determined*. The same epithet is used with the same meaning in *The Merchant of Venice*:

———else nothing in the world  
Could turn so much the constitution  
Of any *constant* man.

STEEVENS.



49. *Since now, &c.*] These two lines are omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

53. *Where nature doth with merit challenge.—*] Where the claim of *merit* is superadded to that of *nature*; or where a superior degree of *natural filial affection* is joined to the claim of other *merits*.

STEEVENS.

62. *Beyond all manner of so much.—*] Beyond all assignable quantity. I love you beyond limits, and cannot say it is *so much*, for how much soever I should name, it would be yet more. JOHNSON.

63. *—do?—*] So the quarto; the folio has *speak*. JOHNSON.

65. *—and with champains rich'd,  
With plenteous rivers—*] These words are omitted in the quartos. To *rich* is an obsolete verb. It is used by Tho. Drant in his translation of Horace's *Epistles*, 1567 :

“To *ritch* his country let his words lyke flowing  
water fall.” STEEVENS.

*Rich'd* is used for *enrich'd*, as *'tice* for *entice*, *'bate* for *abate*, *strain* for *constrain*, &c. MONCK MASON.

70. *I am made, &c.*] Thus the folio. The quarto reads, *Sir, I am made of the self-same metal that my sister is*. STEEVENS.

71. *And prize me*] I believe this passage should rather be pointed thus :

*And prize me at her worth, in my true heart  
I find, she names, &c.*

A i i j

That



That is, *And so may you prize me at her worth, as in my true heart I find, that she names, &c.* TYRWHITT.

I believe we should read :

“ And prize *you* at her worth ;”

That is, set the same high value upon you that she does. MONCK MASON.

*And prize me at her worth*, perhaps means, *I think myself as worthy of your favour as she is.* HENLEY.

73. ———*that I profess*] *That* seems to stand without relation, but is referred to *find*, the first conjunction being inaccurately suppressed. I find *that* she names my deed, I find that I profess, &c. JOHNSON.

The true meaning is this :—“ My sister has equally expressed my sentiments, only she comes short of me in this, that I profess myself an enemy to all joys but you.”—*That I profess*, means, *in that I profess.*

MONCK MASON.

75. *Which the most precious square of sense possesses ;*] *Square* means only compass, comprehension. JOHNSON.

So, in a *Parænesis to the Prince*, by lord Sterline, 1604 :

“ The *square* of reason, and the mind’s clear eye.”

STEEVENS.

80. *More pond’rous than my tongue.*] Thus the folio: the quarto reads, *more richer.* STEEVENS.

83. *No less in space, validity*——] *Validity*, for worth, value ; not for integrity, or good title.

WARBURTON.

84. ———*confirm’d*——] The folio reads, *conferr’d.*

STEEVENS.



84. ———*Now our joy,*] Here the true reading is picked out of two copies. Butter's quarto reads :

—————*But now our joy,  
Although the last, not least in our dear love,  
What can you say to win a third, &c.*

The folio :

—————*Now our joy,  
Although our last, and least ; to whose young love  
The vines of France, and milk of Burgundy,  
Strive to be int'ress'd, What can you say, &c.*

JOHNSON.

85. *Although our last, not least, &c.*] So, in the old anonymous play, King Leir speaking to Mumford :

“ —————to thee last of all ;

“ Not greeted last, 'cause thy desert was small.”

STEEVENS.

Again, in *The Spanish Tragedy*, written before 1593 :

“ The *third* and *last*, not *least*, in our account.”

MALONE.

87. *Strive to be interest'd ;*] So, in the Preface to Drayton's *Polyolbion* : “ —there is scarce any of the nobilitie or gentry of this land, but he is some way or other by his blood *interested* therein.”

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus* :

“ Our sacred laws and just authority

“ Are *interested* therein.”

To *interest* and to *interesse*, are not, perhaps, different spellings of the same verb, but are two distinct words, though of the same import ; the one being  
derived



derived from the Latin, the other from the French *interessé*.  
STEEVENS.

87. ———to draw] The quarto reads—what can you say, to win.  
STEEVENS.

89. These two speeches are wanting in the quartos.  
STEEVENS.

96. *How, how, Cordelia?*] Thus the folio. The quarto reads—Go to, go to.  
STEEVENS.

103. ———Haply, when I shall wed, &c.] So, in *The Mirror of Magistrates*, 1586, Cordila says:

“To love you as I ought, my father, well;

“Yet shortly I may chance, if fortune will,

“To find in heart to beare another more good will:

“Thus much I said of nuptial loves that meant.”

STEEVENS.

107. *To love my father all.*—] These words are restored from the first edition, without which the sense was not complete.  
POPE.

119. *Hold thee, from this,*—] i. e. from this time.

STEEVENS.

148. *As my great patron thought on in my prayers,*—] An allusion to the custom of clergymen praying for their patrons, in what is commonly called the bidding prayer.  
HENLEY.

See also the last note on *King Henry IV.* Part II.

153. *Think'st thou, that duty shall have dread to speak,*] I have given this passage according to the old folio. The quarto agrees with the folio, except that for *reserve thy state*, it gives, *reverse thy doom*, and has



*stoops, instead of falls to folly.* The meaning of *answer my life my judgment*, is, *Let my life be answerable for my judgment*, or, *I will stake my life on my opinion.*—The reading which, without any right, has possessed all the modern copies, is this :

—————to plainness honour

Is bound, when majesty to folly falls.

Reserve thy state ; with better judgment check

This hideous rashness ; with my life I answer,

Thy youngest daughter, &c.

I am inclined to think that *reverse thy doom* was Shakspeare's first reading, as more apposite to the present occasion, and that he changed it afterwards to *reserve thy state*, which conduces more to the progress of the action.

JOHNSON.

160. *Reverbs*——] This is, perhaps, a word of the poet's own making, meaning the same as *reverberates*.

STEEVENS.

162. —————a pawn

*To wage against thine enemies ;*——]

*i. e.* I never regarded my life, as my own, but merely as a thing of which I had the possession, not the property ; and which was entrusted to me as a *pawn* or pledge, to be employed in *waging* war against your enemies.

*To wage against* is an expression used in a letter from Guil. Webbe to Rob. Wilmot, prefixed to *Tancred and Guismund*, 1592 : “——you shall not be able to *wage against* me in the charges growing upon this action,”

STEEVENS.

My



My life I never held but as a *pawn*

To wage against thine enemies.—]

That is, I never considered my life as of more value than that of the commonest of your subjects. A *pawn* in chess is a *common man*, in contradistinction to the *knight*; and Shakspeare has several allusions to this game, particularly in *King John*:

Who painfully with much expedient march,

Have brought a *counter-check* before your gates.

Again, in *King Henry V*:

Therefore take heed how you *impawn* our person.

HENLEY.

167. *The true blank of thine eye.*] The *blank* is the *white*, or exact mark at which the arrow is shot. See *better*, says Kent, *and keep me always in your view*.

JOHNSON.

172. *Dear sir, forbear.*] This speech is omitted in the quartos.

STEEVENS.

174. —*thy gift.*] The quartos read—*thy doom*.

STEEVENS.

180. —*strain'd pride*] The oldest copy reads *strayed pride*; that is, *pride exorbitant*; pride passing due bounds.

JOHNSON.

181. *To come betwixt our sentence and our power;*] *Power*, for execution of the sentence. WARBURTON.

Rather, as Mr. Edwards observes, *our power to execute that sentence*.

STEEVENS.

182. *Which nor our nature, nor our place, can bear,*  
*Our potency make good;*] Mr. Theobald, by putting the first line into a parenthesis, and altering  
*make*



*make* to *made* in the second line, had destroyed the sense of the whole ; which, as it stood before he corrupted the words, was this : “ You have endeavoured, says Lear, to make me break my oath ; you have presumed to stop the execution of my sentence : the latter of these attempts neither my temper nor high station will suffer me to bear ; and the other, had I yielded to it, my power could not make good, or excuse.”——*Which*, in the first line, referring to both attempts : but the ambiguity of it, as it might refer only to the latter, has occasioned all the obscurity of the passage.

WARBURTON.

Theobald only inserted the parenthesis ; he found *made good* in the best copy of 1623. Dr. Warburton has very acutely explained and defended the reading that he has chosen ; but I am not certain that he has chosen right. If we take the reading of the folio, *our potency made good*, the sense will be less profound indeed, but less intricate, and equally commodious. *As thou hast come with unreasonable pride between the sentence which I had passed, and the power by which I shall execute it, take thy reward in another sentence, which shall make good, shall establish, shall maintain, that power.* If Dr. Warburton's explanation be chosen, and every reader will wish to choose it, we may better read :

Which nor our nature, nor our state can bear,  
Or potency make good.——

Mr. Davies thinks, that *our potency made good*, relates only to *our place*.—Which our nature cannot bear, nor  
our



our *place*, without departure from the *potency* of that place. This is easy and clear.—Lear, who is characterized as hot, heady, and violent, is, with very just observation of life, made to entangle himself with vows, upon any sudden provocation to vow revége, and then to plead the obligation of a vow in defence of implacability. JOHNSON.

185. ———*disasters*.] The quartos read *diseases*.

STEEVENS.

192. Freedom *lives hence*——] So the folio. The quartos concur in reading—*Friendship* lives hence.

STEEVENS.

193. ———*dear shelter*——] The quartos read—*protection*.

STEEVENS.

198. *He'll shape his old course*——] He will follow his old maxims; he will continue to act upon the same principles. JOHNSON.

204. ———*quest of love*.] *Quest of love* is *amorous expedition*. The term originated from Romance. A quest was the expedition in which a knight was engaged. This phrase is often to be met with in the *Faery Queen*. STEEVENS.

211. *Seeming*] is *beautiful*. JOHNSON.

*Seeming* rather means *specious*. So, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* :

“——pluck the borrow'd veil of modesty from the so *seeming* mistress Page.”

Again, in *Measure for Measure* :

“——hence shall we see,

“If power change purpose, what our *seemers* be.”



216. ———owes,] i. e. Is possessed of.

STEEVENS.

221. *Election makes not up on such conditions* ] To *make up* signifies to complete, to conclude; as, *they made up the bargain*; but in this sense it has, I think, always the subject noun after it. To *make up*, in familiar language, is neutrally, *to come forward*, to *make advances*, which, I think, is meant here.

JOHNSON.

See *make up*, catch-word Alphabet.

232. *The best, the dearest*;——] The quartos read—

*Most best, most dearest.*

STEEVENS.

236. *That monsters it.*] This uncommon verb occurs again in *Coriolanus*, act ii. scene ii:

“To hear my nothings *monster’d*.” STEEVENS.

237. ———sure, *her offence*

*Must be of such unnatural degree,*

*That monsters it, or your fore-vouch’d affection*

*Fall into taint:*] The word *must* refers to

*fall*, as well as to *be*. Her offence *must* be monstrous, or the former affection which you professed for her, must *fall* into taint; that is, become the subject of reproach.

MONCK MASON.

*Taint* is a term belonging to falconry. So, in the *Booke of Haukyng*, &c. bl. let. no date: “A *taint* is a thing that goeth overthwart the fethers, &c. like as it were eaten with wormes.”

STEEVENS.

257. ———with regards *that stand.*] The quarto reads:

———with *respects* that stands.

STEEVENS.



258. ———*from the entire point.*] *Entire*, for single, unmixed with other considerations. JOHNSON.

The meaning of the passage is, that his love wants something to mark its sincerity :

“ Who seeks for aught in love but love alone ? ”

STEEVENS.

259. *She is herself a dowry.*] The quartos read :

*She is herself and dower.* STEEVENS.

260. *Royal Lear,*] So the quarto ; the folio has—*Royal king.* STEEVENS.

281. *Thou lovest here*————] *Here* and *where* have the power of nouns. Thou lovest this residence to find a better residence in another place. JOHNSON.

See *Where*, catch-word Alphabet.

292. ———*professing bosoms.*] All the ancient editions read—*professed*. The alteration is Mr. Pope's ; but, perhaps, is unnecessary, as Shakspeare often uses one participle for the other ;—*longing* for *longed* in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *all-obeying* for *all-obeyed* in *Antony and Cleopatra*. STEEVENS.

300. *And well are worth the want that you have wanted.*] I explain the passage thus :— You are well deserving of the want of dower that you are without. So, in the third part of *K. Henry VI.* act iv. sc. 1 : “ Though I *want* a kingdom,” *i. e.* though I am without a kingdom. Again, in *Stowe's Chronicle*, p. 137 : “ Anselm was expelled the realm, and *wanted* the whole profits of his bishoprick,” *i. e.* he did not receive the profits, &c. TOLLET.

301. ———*plaited cunning*——] Or (as the quarto has it)



it) *pleated*. So, in *Venus and Adonis* :

“ For that he colour’d with his high estate,

“ Hiding base sin in *pleats* of majesty.”

MALONE.

302. *Who cover faults, &c.*] The quartos read,

Who *covers* faults ; at last *shame them* derides.

This I have replaced. The former editors read with the folio :

Who *covers* faults at last with shame derides.

STEEVENS.

Mr. Monck Mason believes the folio, with the alteration of a letter, to be the right reading :

Time shall unfold what *plaited* cunning hides,

Who *covert* faults at last with shame derides.

The word *who* referring to *time*.

In the third act, Lear says :

——Caitiff shake to pieces,

That under *covert*, and convenient seeming,

Hath practised on man’s life.

REED.

In this passage Cordelia is made to allude to a passage of Scripture : *Prov.* xxviii. 13. “ He that *covereth* his sins shall not prosper : but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

HENLEY.

319. ——*of long engrafted condition,*] *i. e.* vices of the mind confirmed by habit.

MALONE.

The same figure occurs both in *Hamlet* and *Othello*.

\* \* \*

325. ——*let us hit*——] So the old quarto.

The folio, *let us fit*.

JOHNSON.

——*let us hit*——] *i. e.* agree.

STEEVENS.



330. ———i' the heat] *i. e.* We must strike while the iron's hot. STEEVENS.

331. Thou, nature, art my goddess;——] Dr. Warburton says that Shakspeare has made his *bastard* an *atheist*; when it is very plain that Edmund only speaks of *nature* in opposition to *custom*, and not (as he supposes) to the existence of a *God*. Edmund means only, as he came not into the world as *custom* or *law* had prescribed, so he had nothing to do but to follow *nature* and her laws, which make no difference between legitimacy and illegitimacy, between the eldest and the youngest.

To contradict Dr. Warburton's assertion yet more strongly, Edmund concludes this very speech by an invocation to heaven.

“Now, gods, stand up for bastards!” STEEVENS.

333. Stand in the plague of custom——] Shakspeare seems to mean by this expression: Wherefore should I remain in a situation where I shall be plagued and tormented only in consequence of the contempt with which custom regards those who are not the issue of a lawful bed? STEEVENS.

334. The courtesy of nations——] Curiosity, in the time of Shakspeare, was a word that signified *an over-nice scrupulousness* in manners, dress, &c. In this sense it is used in *Timon*: “When thou wast (says *Ape-mantus*) in thy gilt and thy perfume, they mock'd thee for too much *curiosity*.” Barret, in his *Alvearie, or Quadruple Dictionary*, 1580, interprets it, *piked diligence: something too curious, or too much affected*: and again,



again, in this play of *King Lear*, Shakspeare seems to use it in the same sense, “which I have rather blamed as my own jealous *curiosity*.” STEEVENS.

334. ———to *deprive me*,] To *deprive* was, in our author’s time, synonymous to *disinherit*. The old dictionary renders *exhæredo* by this word: and Holinshed speaks of *the line of Henry before deprived*.

Again, in Warner’s *Albion’s England*, 1602, B. III. ch. xvi.

“To you, if whom ye have *depriv’d* ye shall restore again.”

Again, *Ibid*.

“The one restor’d, for his late *depriving* nothing mov’d.” STEEVENS.

336. *Lag of a brother?*] Edmund inveighs against the tyranny of custom, in two instances, with respect to younger brothers, and to bastards. In the former he must not be understood to mean himself, but the argument becomes general by implying more than is said, *Wherefore should I, or any man?* HANMER.

341. *Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, &c.*] These fine lines are an instance of our author’s admirable art in giving proper sentiments to his characters. The *bastard’s* is that of a confirmed atheist; and his being made to ridicule *judicial astrology*, was designed as one mark of such a character. For this impious juggle had a religious reverence paid to it at that time. And therefore the best characters in this play acknowledge the force of the stars’ influence. But how much the lines following this are in character,



may be seen by that monstrous wish of Vanini, the Italian atheist, in his tract *De admirandis Naturæ, &c.* printed at Paris, 1616, the very year our poet died. “*O utinam extra legitimum & connubialem thorum essem procreatus! Ita enim progenitores mei in venerem incaluisissent ardentius, ac cumulatim affatimque generosa semina contulissent, è quibus ego formæ blanditiam & elegantiam, robustas corporis vires, mentemque innubilem consequutus fuisset. At quia conjugatorum sum soboles, his orbatus sum bonis.*” Had the book been published but ten or twenty years sooner, who would not have believed that Shakspeare alluded to this passage? But the divinity of his genius foretold, as it were, what such an atheist as Vanini would say, when he wrote upon such a subject.      **WARBURTON.**

Mr. Steevens hath, in a former note, confuted the imputed atheism of Edmund.      \* \* \*.

351. *Shall top the legitimate.*——] Here the Oxford editor would shew us that he is as good at coining phrases as his author, and so alters the text thus:

*Shall toe th’ legitimate.*——

*i. e.* says he, *stand on even ground with him*; as he would do with his author.      **WARBURTON.**

Hanmer’s emendation will appear very plausible to him that shall consult the original reading. Butter’s quarto reads:

———Edmund the base

*Shall tooth’ legitimate.*——

The folio.

———Edmund the base

*Shall to th’ legitimate.*——

Hanmer,



Hanner, therefore, could hardly be charged with coining a word, though his explanation may be doubted. To *toe* him, is perhaps to *kick him out*, a phrase yet in vulgar use; or, to *toe*, may be literally to *supplant*. JOHNSON.

Mr. Edwards would read—Shall *top* the legitimate.

I have received this emendation, because the succeeding expression, I *grow*, seems to favour it.

STEEVENS.

So, in *Macbeth* :

“ ———Not in the legions

“ Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd,

“ To *top* Macbeth.” MALONE.

354. ———subscrib'd *his power*!] *Subscrib'd*  
for *transferred, alienated*. WARBURTON.

To subscribe, is, to transfer by signing or *subscribing* a writing of testimony. We now use the term, He *subscribed* forty pounds to the new building.

JOHNSON.

The folio reads—*prescribed*.

STEEVENS.

355. ———*exhibition*!——] Is *allowance*. The term is yet used in the universities. JOHNSON.

———*All this done*

‘ Upon the gad!———]

So the old copies : the later editions read :

———*All is gone*

Upon the gad!———

which, besides that it is unauthorized, is less proper.

To do upon the *gad*, is, to act by the sudden stimulation



lation of caprice, as cattle run madding when they are stung by the gad fly. JOHNSON.

A thing done upon the *gad* is done suddenly, or (as before) while the *iron is hot*. A *gad* is an *iron bar*.

## REMARKS.

See *Gad*, catch-word Alphabet.

375. ———taste of my virtue.] Though *taste* may stand in this place, yet I believe we should read, *assay* or *test* of my virtue: they are both metallurgical terms, and properly joined. So, in *Hamlet*:

“Bring me to the *test*.” JOHNSON.

The old reading is the true one. See Mr. Steevens’s note on the word *say*, act v. line 254. In the eastern parts of the kingdom this expression is still retained.

HENLEY.

379. ———idle and fond——] Weak and foolish.

JOHNSON.

420. ———pretence——] Pretence is design, purpose. So, afterwards, in this play:

*Pretence* and purpose of unkindness. JOHNSON.

427. *Edm.*] From *Nor is, to heaven and earth!* are words omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

430. ———wind me into him——] So, in *Twelfth-Night*: “challenge *me* the duke’s youth to fight with him.” Instances of this phraseology occur in *The Merchant of Venice*, *K. Henry IV. Part I.* and in *Othello*.

STEEVENS.

431. ———I would unstate myself to be in a due resolution.] The same word occurs in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“Yes,



“ Yes, like enough, high-battl’d Cæsar will  
 “ *Unstate* his happiness, and be urg’d to shew  
 “ Against a sword.”——

To *unstate*, in both these instances, seems to have the same meaning. Edgar has been represented as wishing to possess his father’s fortune, *i. e.* to *unstate* him; and therefore his father says he would *unstate* himself to be sufficiently resolved to punish him.

To *enstate* is to *confer* a fortune. So, in *Measure for Measure* :

——his possessions

We do *enstate* and widow you withal. STEEVENS.

It seems to me, that *I would unstate myself* in this passage means simply *I would give my estate* (including rank as well as fortune.) TYRWHITT.

Gloster cannot bring himself thoroughly to believe what Edmund told him of Edgar; he says, Can he be such a monster? He afterwards desires Edmund to sound his intentions, and then says, he would give all he possessed to be certain of the truth; for that is the meaning of the words *to be in a due resolution*.

Othello uses the word *resolved* in the same sense more than once :

“ ——I will be *resolved*,

“ For once to be in doubt, is once to be *resolved*.”

In both which places, *to be resolved* means *to be certain* of the fact.

In Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Maid’s Tragedy*, Amin-tor says to Evadne,

“ ’Tis



“ 'Tis not his crown

“ Shall buy me to thy bed, now I *resolve*,

“ He hath dishonour'd thee.”

And afterwards in the same play the King says :

“ Well, I am *resolved*

“ You lay not with her.” MONCK MASON.

433. ——convey *the business*——] To *convey*, is to *manage artfully* : we say of a juggler, that he has a clean *conveyance*. JOHNSON.

So, in *Mother Bombie*, by Lilly, 1599 : “ Two, they say, may keep counsel if one be away ; but to *convey* knavery two are too few, and four are too many.”

Again, in *A mad World, My Masters*, by Middleton, 1608 :

“ ——thus I've *convey'd* it ;——

“ I'll counterfeit a fit of violent sickness.”

STEEVENS.

So, in Lord Sterline's *Julius Cæsar*, 1607 :

“ A circumstance, or an indifferent thing,

“ Doth oft mar all, when not with care *convey'd*.”

MALONE.

437. ——*the wisdom of nature*——] That is, though natural philosophy can give account of eclipses, yet we feel their consequences. JOHNSON.

442. *This villain*——] These words, and all to *graves* inclusive, are omitted in the quartos.

STEEVENS.

452. *This is the excellent foppery of the world, &c.*] In Shakspeare's best plays, besides the vices that arise from the subject, there is generally some peculiar prevailing



prevailing folly, principally ridiculed, that runs through the whole piece. Thus, in *The Tempest*, the lying disposition of travellers; and, in *As You Like It*, the fantastick humour of courtiers is exposed and satirised with infinite pleasantry. In like manner, in this play of *Lear*, the dotages of judicial astrology are severely ridiculed. I fancy, was the date of its first performance well considered, it would be found that something or other happened at that time which gave a more than ordinary run to this deceit, as these words seem to intimate; *I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.*

WARBURTON.

457. ———and treachers——] The modern editors read *treacherous*; but the reading of the first copies, which I have restored to the text, may be supported from most of the old contemporary writers. So, in *Doctor Dodypoll*, a comedy, 1600:

“How smooth the cunning *treacher* look’d upon it!”

Chaucer, in his *Romaunt of the Rose*, mentions “the false *treacher*,” and Spenser often uses the same word.

STEEVENS.

462. ———of a star.] Both the quartos read—*to* the charge of stars.

STEEVENS.

468. ———pat he comes——] The quartos read,

——and out he comes.——

STEEVENS.

*Pat he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy:——*] Instead of admitting with Dr. Warburton that Shakspeare meant this as a *panegyrick*, on “the natural



natural winding up of the plot in the comedy of the ancients;" or with Mr. Warner, that it is "*satire*, and intended to ridicule the awkward conclusions of our old comedies."—Is it not more probable, that a *particular comedy* was referred to, and which perhaps gave rise to the proverb: "*Talk of the devil, and his horns will appear?*"—At least, this used to be the case in the puppet-show of Punch. HENLEY.

478. *I promise you*——] The folio edition commonly differs from the first quarto, by augmentation or insertions; but in this place it varies by omission, and by the omission of something which naturally introduces the following dialogue. It is easy to remark, that in this speech, which ought, I think, to be inserted as it now is in the text, Edmund, with the common craft of fortune-tellers, mingles the past and future, and tells of the future only what he already foreknows by confederacy, or can attain by probable conjecture. JOHNSON.

479. ——*as of*——] These words, and all that follow to *come, come*, inclusive, are omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

484. For *breeches* read *breaches*.

485. *How long have you*——] This line I have restored from the two eldest quartos, and have regulated the following speech according to the same copies. STEEVENS.

500. *That's my fear.*] All between this and the next speech of Edmund, is omitted in the quartos.

STEEVENS.



523. *By day and night he wrongs me:]* This passage has hitherto been printed as an adjuration :

By day and night ! &c.

But wrongly, as was observed to me by Mr. Whalley.

STEEVENS.

536. ———*Idle old man,*] The lines from *Not to be over-rul'd*, &c. to *Remember*, as they are fine in themselves, and very much in character for Goneril, I have restored from the old quarto. The last verse, which I have ventured to amend, is there printed thus :

With checks, like flatt'ries when they are seen  
abus'd.

THEOBALD.

These lines hardly deserve a note, though Mr. Theobald thinks them *very fine*. The controverted line is yet in the old quarto, not as the editors represent it, but thus :

With checks *as* flatteries when they are seen  
abus'd.

I am in doubt whether there is any error of transcription. The sense seems to be this: *Old men must be treated with checks, when as they are seen to be deceived with flatteries:* or, *when they are weak enough to be seen abused by flatteries, they are then weak enough to be used with checks.* There is a play of the words *used* and *abused* : to *abuse* is, in our author, very frequently the same as to *deceive*. This construction is harsh and ingrammatical ; Shakspeare perhaps thought it vicious, and chose to throw away the lines rather than correct them, nor would now thank the officious-



ness of his editors, who restore what they do not understand. JOHNSON.

The plain meaning, I believe, is—old fools must be used with checks, as flatteries must be check'd when they are made a bad use of. TOLLET.

I understand this passage thus: *Old fools—must be used with checks, as well as flatteries, when they [i. e. flatteries] are seen to be abused.* TYRWHITT.

The sentiment of Goneril is obviously this: “When old fools will not yield to the appliances of persuasion, harsh treatment must be employed to compel their submission.” When *flatteries are seen to be abus'd* by them, *checks must be used*, as the only means left to subdue them. HENLEY.

548. *If but as well I other accents borrow,  
And can my speech disuse.—*] Thus Rowe, Pope, and Johnson, in contradiction to all the ancient copies.

The first folio reads the whole passage as follows:

*If but as will I other accents borrow,  
That can my speech defuse, my good intent  
May carry through, &c.*

We must suppose that Kent advances looking on his disguise. This circumstance very naturally leads to his speech, which otherwise would have no very apparent introduction. *If I can change my speech as well as I have changed my dress.* To *diffuse* speech, signifies to disorder it, and so to disguise it; as in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, act iv. scene 4:

“—rush



“———rush at once

“With some *diffused* song.”———

Again, in the *Nice Valour*, &c. by Beaumont and Fletcher, Cupid says to the *Passionate Man*, who appears disordered in his dress:

“———Go not so *diffusedly*.”

Again, in our author's *King Henry V*:

“———swearing, and stern looks, *diffus'd* attire.”

Again, in a book entitled, *A Green Forest, or A Natural History*, &c. by John Maplet, 1567:—“In this stone is apparently scene verie often the verie forme of a tode, with bespotted and coloured feete, but those uglye and *defusedly*.”—To *diffuse speech* may, however, mean to *speak broad*, with a clownish accent.—The two eldest quartos concur with the folio, except that they read *well* instead of *will*. STEEVENS.

562. ——*him that is wise, and says little*;——] To *converse* signifies immediately and properly to *keep company*, not to *discourse* or *talk*. His meaning is, that he chuses for his companions men of reserve and caution; men who are no tatlers nor tale-bearers.

JOHNSON.

564. ——*and to eat no fish*.] In queen Elizabeth's time the Papists were esteemed, and with good reason, enemies to the government. Hence the proverbial phrase of, *He's an honest man, and eats no fish*; to signify he's a friend to the government, and a Protestant. The eating fish, on a religious account, being then esteemed such a badge of Popery, that when it was enjoined for a season by act of parlia-



ment, for the encouragement of the fish-towns, it was thought necessary to declare the reason; hence it was called *Cecil's fast*. To this disgraceful badge of Popery Fletcher alludes in his *Woman-hater*, who makes the courtezan say, when Lazarillo, in search of the Umbrano's head, was seized at her house by the intelligencers for a traitor: "Gentlemen, I am glad you have discovered him. He should not have eaten under my roof for twenty pounds. And sure I did not like him, when he *called for fish*." And Marston's *Dutch Courtezan*: "I trust I am none of the wicked that *eat fish a Fryday*." WARBURTON.

616. ———a very pretence.] *Pretence*, in Shakspeare, generally signifies *design*. So, in a foregoing scene in this play: "——to no other *pretence* of danger."

STEEVENS.

630. ———bandy looks———] A metaphor from *Tennis*:

"Come in, take this *bandy* with the racket of patience." *Decker's Satiromastix*.

Again: "——buckle with them hand to hand,

"And *bandy* blows as thick as hailstones fall."

*Wily Beguiled*.

STEEVENS.

644. ———take my coxcomb.———] Meaning his cap, called so, because on the top of the fool or jester's cap was sewed a piece of red cloth, resembling the comb of a cock. The word, afterwards, was used to denote a vain, conceited, meddling fellow.

WARBURTON.

See



See Fig. XII. in the plate at the end of the first part of *King Henry IV.* with Mr. Tollet's explanation, who has since added, that Minshew, in his *Dictionary*, 1627, says, "Natural ideots and fools have, and still do accustome themselves to weare in their cappes cockes feathers, or a hat *with a neck and head of a cocke on the top*, and a bell thereon," &c. STEEVENS.

645. *Why, fool?*] The folio reads—*why, my boy?* and gives this question to Lear. STEEVENS.

648. —*thou'lt catch cold shortly*] *i. e.* be turned out of doors, and exposed to the inclemency of the weather. FARMER.

653. —*two coxcombs*—] Two fools caps; intended, as it seems, to mark double folly in the man that gives all to his daughters. JOHNSON.

This seems to be inaccurate. The fool assigns the first cap to Lear for having given up half his kingdom to one daughter, and the second, for not withholding the remaining half from the other. HENLEY.

660. —*lady brach*—] *Brach* is a bitch of the hunting kind.

"Nos quidem hodie *brach* dicimus de cane fœminea, quæ leporem ex odore persequitur." Spelm. Gloss. in voce *Bracco*.

Dr. Letherland, on the margin of Dr. Warburton's edition, proposed *lady's brach*, *i. e.* *favour'd animal*. The third quarto has a much more unmannerly reading, which I would not wish to establish: but all the other editions concur in reading *lady brach*. *Lady* is still a common name for a hound. So Hotspur:

C i i j

"I had



“ I had rather hear *lady*, my *brach*, howl in Irish.”  
Again, in Ben Jonson’s *Poem to a Friend*, &c.

“ Do all the tricks of a salt *lady* bitch.”

In the old black letter *Booke of Huntyng*, &c. no date, the list of dogs concludes thus: “ —and small *ladz popies* that bere awai the fleas and divers small fautes.”  
We might read—“ when *lady* the *brach*,” &c.

STEEVENS.

668. *Lend less than thou owest,*] That is, *do not lend all that thou hast*. To *owe*, in old English, is *to possess*.

JOHNSON.

670. *Learn more than thou trowest,*] To *trow*, is an old word which signifies *to believe*. The precept is admirable.

WARBURTON.

676. *This is nothing, fool.*] The quartos give this speech to *Lear*.

STEEVENS.

687. *No, lad—*] This dialogue, from *No, lad, teach me*, down to *Give me an egg*, was restored from the first edition by Mr. Theobald. It is omitted in the folio, perhaps for political reasons, as it seemed to censure monopolies.

JOHNSON.

701. —*if I had a monopoly out, they would have a part on’t.*] A satire on the gross abuses of monopolies at that time; and the corruption and avarice of the courtiers, who commonly went shares with the patentee.

WARBURTON.

*Monopolies* were in Shakspeare’s time the common objects of satire. So, in Decker’s *Match me in London*, 1631:

“ —Give him a court loaf, stop his mouth with a *monopoly*.”



Again, in *Ram-Alley, or Merry Tricks*, 1611 :

“ A knight, and never heard of smock-fees ! I would I had a *monopoly* of them, so there was no impost set on them.”

Again, in the birth of *Merlin*, 1662 :

“ ——— So foul a monster would be a fair *monopoly* worth the begging.”

In the books of the Stationers-Company, I meet with the following entry. “ John Charlewoode, Oct. 1587 : lycensed unto him by the whole consent of the assistants, the *onlye* ymprynting of all manner of billes for plaiers.” Again, Nov. 6, 1615, The liberty of printing *all* billes for fencing was granted to Mr. Purfoot. STEEVENS.

714. *Fools ne'er had less grace in a year,*] There never was a time when fools were less in favour ; and the reason is, that they were never so little wanted, for wise men now supply their place. Such I think is the meaning. Both the quartos read *wit* for *grace*. JOHNSON.

723. *Then they for sudden joy did weep, &c.*] So, in the *Rape of Lucrece*, by Heywood, 1630 :

“ When Tarquin first in court began,

“ And was approved king,

“ So men for sudden joy did weep,

“ But I for sorrow sing.”

I cannot ascertain in what year T. Heywood first published this play, as the copy in 1630, which I have used, was the *fourth* impression. STEEVENS.

737. ——— *that frontlet* ———] Lear alludes to the *frontlet*,



*frontlet*, which was anciently part of a woman's dress. So, in the play called the *Foure P's*, 1569:

“ Forsooth women have many lets,

“ And they be masked in many nets:

“ As *frontlets*, fillets, partlets, and bracelets:

“ And then their bonnets and their pionets.”

Again, in Lyly's *Midas*, 1592:

“ —Hoods, *frontlets*, wires, cauls, curling-irons, perriwigs, bodkins, fillets, hair-laces, ribbons, roles, knot-strings, glasses, &c.”

STEEVENS.

740. —now thou art an O without a figure:] The fool means to say, that Lear, “having pared his wit on both sides, and left nothing in the middle,” is become a mere cypher; which has no arithmetical value, unless preceded or followed by some figure.

MALONE.

747. *That's a sheal'd peascod.*] *i. e.* Now a mere husk, which contains nothing. The outside of a king remains, but all the intrinsick parts of royalty are gone: he has nothing to give.

JOHNSON.

*That's a sheal'd peascod.*] *i. e.* The robing of Richard II.'s effigy in Westminster-Abbey is wrought with *peascods open*, and the *peas out*; perhaps in allusion to his being once in full possession of sovereignty, but soon reduced to an empty title. See Camden's *Remains*, 1674, p. 453. edit. 1657, p. 340. TOLLET.

755. —put it on] *i. e.* promote, push it forward. So, in *Macbeth*:

“ —————the pow'rs

“ Put on their instruments.” —————

STEEVENS.



756. *By your allowance;]* *By your approbation.*

MALONE.

765. ———*were left darkling.*] This word is used by Milton, *Paradise Lost*, book I :

“ ———as the wakeful bird

“ Sings *darkling.*” ———

Dr. Farmer concurs with me in supposing, that the words—*So out went the candle, &c.* are a fragment of some old song.

STEEVENS.

770. ———*transform you.*] Thus the quartos. The folio reads—*transport you.*

STEEVENS.

773. ———*Whoop, Jug, I love thee.*] This, as I am informed, is a quotation from the burthen of an old song.

STEEVENS.

*Whoop, Jug, I'll do thee no harm,* occurs in *The Winter's Tale.*

MALONE.

774. ———*this is not Lear :*] This passage appears to have been imitated by Ben Jonson in his *Sad Shepherd :*

“ ———this is not Marian !

“ Nor am I Robin Hood ! I pray you ask her !

“ Ask her, good shepherds ! ask her all for me :

“ Or rather ask yourselves, if she be she ;

“ Or I be I.”

STEEVENS.

777. —*Ha ! waking ?—'Tis not so.*] Thus the folio. The quartos read :

———*sleeping or waking ; ha ! sure 'tis not so.*

STEEVENS.

778. —*Lear's shadow ?]* The folio gives these words to the Fool.

STEEVENS.

779.



779. —————for by the marks

*Of sov'reignty, of knowledge, and of reason]*

The meaning appears to me to be this :

“ Were I to judge from the marks of sovereignty, of knowledge, or of reason, I should be induced to think I had daughters ; yet that must be a false persuasion—It cannot be.” MONCK MASON.

781. ———*I had daughters.*—] Here the quarto interposes the following short and useless speech of the fool :

“ Which they will make an obedient father.”

*Which*, is on this occasion used with two deviations from present language. It is referred, contrary to the rules of grammarians, to the pronoun *I*, and is employed, according to a mode now obsolete, for *whom*, the accusative case of *who*. STEEVENS.

793. ———*a grac'd palace.*—] A palace grac'd by the presence of a sovereign. WARBURTON.

796. *A little to disquantity your train ;]* A little is the common reading ; but it appears, from what Lear says in the next scene, that this number *fifty* was required to be cut off, which (as the editions stood) is no where specified by Goneril. POPE.

*Of fifty to disquantity your train ;]* If Mr. Pope had examined the old copies as accurately as he pretended to have done, he would have found, in the *first folio*, that Lear had an *exit* marked for him after these words—

To have a thankless child.—Away, away !  
and goes out while Albany and Goneril have a short  
conference



conference of two speeches ; and then returns in a still greater passion, having been informed (as it should seem) of the express number, without.

What? *fifty* of my followers at a clap?

This renders all change needless ; and *away, away!* being restored, prevents the repetition of *go, go, my people!* which, as the text stood before this regulation, concluded both that and the foregoing speech. Goneril with great art is made to avoid mentioning the limited number ; and leaves her father to be informed of it by accident, which she knew would be the case as soon as he left her presence. STEEVENS.

797. —————*that shall still depend,*] *Depend,*  
for continue in service. WARBURTON.

810. *Than the sea-monster!*] Mr. Upton observes, that the sea-monster is the *Hippopotamus*, the hieroglyphical symbol of impiety and ingratitude. Sandys, in his travels, says—“ that he killeth his sire, and ravisheth his own dam.” STEEVENS.

811. *Pray, sir, be patient.*] The quartos omit this speech. STEEVENS.

818. —*like an engine*—] Mr. Edwards conjectures that by an engine is meant the *rack*. He is right. To *engine* is, in Chaucer, to *strain* upon the *rack* ; and in the following passage from the *Three Lords of London*, 1590, *engine* seems to be used for the same instrument of torture :

“ From Spain they come, with *engine* and intent,

“ To slay, subdue, to triumph, and *torment.*”

Again, in the *Night-Walker*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

“ Ther



“Ther souls shot through with adders torn, on  
engines.” STEEVENS.

822. —Go, go, my people!] Perhaps these words ought to be regulated differently :

Go ; go :—my people !

By Albany's answer it should seem that he had endeavoured to appease Lear's anger ; and perhaps it was intended by the author that he should here be put back by the king with these words—“Go ; go ;” and that Lear should then turn hastily from his son-in-law, and call his train : “My people !” Mes Gens, French. So, in a former part of this scene :

“You strike *my people* ; and your disorder'd rabble

“Make servants of their betters.”

Again, in *Othello* :

“—Call up my people.”

However the passage be understood, these latter words must bear this sense. The meaning of the whole, indeed, may be only—“Away, away, my followers !” MALONE.

824. *Of what hath mov'd you.*] Omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

831. ——*from her derogate body*——] *Derogate* for *unnatural*. WARBURTON.

Rather, I think, *degraded* ; *blasted*. JOHNSON.

834. —*thwart*] *Thwart*, as a noun adjective, is not frequent in our language ; it is however to be found in *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578, “Sith fortune *thwart* doth crosse my joys with care.” The quarto reads,  
a thourt



a *thourt disvetur'd* torment, which I apprehend to be *disfeatur'd*. HENDERSON.

834. ———*disnatur'd*] *Disnatur'd* is wanting natural affection. So, Daniel in *Hymen's Triumph*, 1623:

“I am not so *disnatured* a man.” STEEVENS.

836. ———*cadent tears*———] *i. e.* Falling tears. Dr. Warburton would read *candent*. STEEVENS.

Dr. Warburton proposes to read *candent*; and the words—*these hot tears*, in Lear's next speech, may seem to authorise the amendment; but the present reading is right. It is a more severe imprecation to wish, that tears by constant flowing may fret channels in the cheeks; which implies a long life of wretchedness, than to wish that those channels should be made by scalding tears, which alone do not mark the same continuation of misery.

The same thought occurs in *Troilus and Cressida*, act v. sc. iii.

“Not Priamus and Hecuba on knees,

“Their eyes o'er-galled with *recourse* of tears,” should prevent his going to the field.

MONCK MASON.

837. *Turn all her mother's pains and benefits*

*To laughter and contempt* ;] “Her mother's pains” here signifies, not bodily sufferings, or the throes of child-birth (with which this “disnatured babe” being unacquainted, it could not *deride* or *despise* them), but *maternal cares*; the solicitude of a mother for the welfare of her child. *Benefits* mean *good offices*; her kind and *beneficent* attention to the

D

education



education of her offspring, &c. Mr. Roderick has, in my opinion, explained both these words wrong. He is equally mistaken in supposing that the sex of this child is ascertained by the word *her*; which clearly relates, not to Goneril's issue, but to herself. "*Her mother's pains*" means—the pains she takes *as a mother*. MALONE.

849. I will transcribe this passage from the first edition, that it may appear to those who are unacquainted with old books, what is the difficulty of revision, and what indulgence is due to those that endeavour to restore corrupted passages. — *That these hot tears, that breake from me perforce, should make the worse blasts and fogs upon the untender woundings of a father's curse, peruse every sense about the old fond eyes, bewEEP this cause again, &c.* JOHNSON.

852. *The untented woundings*————] *Untented* wounds, mean wounds in their worst state, not having a *tent* in them to digest them; and may possibly signify here such as will not admit of having a tent put into them for that purpose. One of the quartos reads *untender*. STEEVENS.

855. ————*that you lose.*] The quartos read—*that you make.* STEEVENS.

857. *Let it be so, &c*] The reading is here gleaned up, part from the first, and part from the second edition. JOHNSON.

*Let it be so,* is omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

875. *Gon.*] All from hence, to *How now*, is omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.



877. *At point,*] I believe, means completely armed, and consequently ready at appointment or command on the slightest notice. STEEVENS.

887. *How now, Oswald?*] The quartos read—*What, Oswald, ho!*

Osw. *Here, madam.*

Gon. *What, have you writ this letter, &c.*

STEEVENS.

893. *—compact it more.—*] Unite one circumstance with another, so as to make consistent account.

JOHNSON.

897. *—more at task—*] It is a common phrase now with parents and governesses. *I'll take you to task*, i. e. *I will reprehend and correct you*. *To be at task*, therefore, is to be liable to *reprehension and correction*.

JOHNSON.

Both the quartos, instead of *at task*—read, *alapt*. A late editor of *King Lear*, says, that the first quarto reads *attask'd*; but unless there be a third quarto, which I have never seen or heard of, his assertion is erroneous. STEEVENS.

The word *task* is frequently used by Shakspeare, and indeed by other writers of his time, in the sense of *tax*. Goneril means to say, that he was more taxed for want of wisdom, than praised for mildness.

So, in *The Island Princess*:

“You are too saucy, too impudent,

“To task me with those errors.”

MONCK MASON.



900. *Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.*] So, in our author's 103d Sonnet :

“ Were it not sinful then, *striving to mend,*

“ *To mar the subject that before was well ?*”

MALONE.

906. ————*there before you.*] He seems to intend to go to his daughter ; but it appears afterwards that he is going to the house of Gloster. JOHNSON.

916. ————*thy other daughter will use thee kindly :*] The *Fool* uses the word *kindly* here in two senses ; it means *affectionately*, and like the rest of her kind.

MONCK MASON.

927. *I did her wrong*——] He is musing on Cordelia. JOHNSON.

943. *To take it again perforce!*——] He is meditating on the resumption of his royalty. JOHNSON.

He is rather meditating on his daughter's having in so violent a manner deprived him of those privileges which before she had agreed to grant him.

STEEVENS.

The subject of Lear's meditation is the resumption of that moiety of his kingdom which he had given to Goneril. This was what Albany apprehended, when he replied to the upbraidings of his wife:—“ Well, well ; the event :”——what Lear himself projected when he left Goneril to go to Regan :—

“ —Yet I have left a daughter,

“ Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable ;

“ When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails

“ She'll flea thy wolfish visage. Thou shalt find,

“ That



“ That I'll resume the shape, which thou dost think,  
 “ I have cast off for ever ; thou shalt, I warrant  
 thee.”—

And what *Curan* afterwards refers to, when he asks  
*Edmund* : “ Have you heard of no likely wars toward,  
 'twixt the dukes of Cornwall and Albany ?” HENLEY.

ACT II.

Line 9. ——— *EAR-kissing arguments.*] *Ear-kissing arguments* means that they are yet in reality only *whisper'd ones*. STEEVENS.

11. *Cur.* This and the following speech are omitted in one of the quartos. STEEVENS.

18. ——— *queazy question,*] *Queazy*, I believe, means *delicate*, what requires to be handled nicely. So, Ben Jonson, in *Sejanus* :

“ Those times are somewhat *queasy* to be touch'd.—

“ Have you not seen or read part of his book ?”

So, in Ben Jonson's *New Inn* :

“ Notes of a *queasy* and sick stomach, labouring

“ With want of a true injury.”——

Again, in *Much Ado about Nothing* :

“ Despight of his quick wit and *queasy* stomach.”

STEEVENS.

*Queazy* is still used in Devonshire, to express that

D i i j

sickishness



sickishness of stomach which the slightest disgust is apt to provoke. HENLEY.

25. ——*i' the haste,*] I should suppose we ought to read only *in haste*; *i' the* being repeated accidentally by the compositor. STEEVENS.

26. —————*have you nothing said*

*Upon his party 'gainst the duke of Albany?]*

The meaning is, *have you said nothing upon the party formed by him against the duke of Albany?* HANMER.

I cannot but think the line corrupted, and would read :

*Against his party, for the duke of Albany ?*

JOHNSON.

*Upon his party,* means simply *on his behalf.*

HENLEY.

41. *Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon]*  
This was a proper circumstance to urge to Gloster; who appears, by what passed between him and his bastard son in a foregoing scene, to be very superstitious with regard to this matter. WARBURTON.

50. —————*their thunders*—————] First quarto: the rest have it, *the thunder.* JOHNSON.

59. ——*gasted*——] Frighted. JOHNSON.

So, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Wit at several Weapons* :

“ ——either the sight of the lady has *gasted* him,  
or else he's drunk.” STEEVENS.

62. *Not in this land shall he remain uncaught ;*  
*And found—Dispatch,—]* The sense is here interrupted.



interrupted. He shall be caught—and found, *he shall be punish'd*. Dispatch. JOHNSON.

64. ———*arch*———] i. e. *Chief*; a word now used only in composition, as *arch-angel*, *arch-duke*.

So, in Heywood's *If you know not me, you know Nobody*, 1613:

“Poole, that *arch* for truth and honesty.”

STEEVENS.

67. ———*murderous coward*———] The first edition reads, *caitiff*. JOHNSON.

70. *And found him pight to do it, with curst speech.*] *Pight* is pitched, fixed, settled. *Curst* is severe, harsh, vehemently angry. JOHNSON.

Thus, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

“———tents

“Thus proudly *pight* upon our Phrygian plains.”

So, in the old morality of *Lusty Juventus*, 1561:

“Therefore my heart is surely *pyght*

“Of her alone to have a sight.” STEEVENS.

73. ———*would the reposal*] i. e. Would any opinion that men have reposed in thy trust, virtue, &c.

WARBURTON.

The old quarto reads, *could the reposure*.

STEEVENS.

83. *Strange and, &c.*] *Strong and fastened*. Quarto.

JOHNSON.

91. *Capable of my land*———] i. e. capable of succeeding to my land, notwithstanding the legal bar of thy illegitimacy.

So, in the *Life and Death of Will Summers, &c.*—

“The



“The king next demanded of him (he being a fool) whether he were capable to inherit any land,” &c.

STEEVENS.

116. *He did bewray his practice;—*] i. e. *Discover, betray.*

So, in *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington*, 1601:

“We were *bewray’d*, beset, and forc’d to yield.”

Again, in *The Devil’s Charter*, 1607:

“Thy solitary passions should *bewray*

“Some discontent.”——

*Practice* is always used by Shakspeare for *insidious mischief*.

So, in *Revenge for Honour*, by Chapman:

“Howe’er thou scap’st, my *practices* with life.”

The quartos read *betray*.

STEEVENS.

131. ——threading *dark-ey’d night*.] The quarto reads:

——*threat’ning* *dark-ey’d night*. JOHNSON.

Shakspeare uses the former of these expressions in *Coriolanus*, act iii. line 155.

“They would not *thread* the gates.” STEEVENS.

132. *Occasions, noble Gloster, of some prize,*] We should read, *poize*, i. e. weight, WARBURTON.

*Prize*, or *price*, for value.

JOHNSON.

Shakspeare having elsewhere used to *peize* for to *balance* or *weigh*, and the letter *r* in his own autograph (see the plate of *fac simile*) being made more like an *e*, I conclude that *peize* was the original word, and was used to signify *deliberation*.

HENLEY.



136. ———*from our home :—*—] Not at home, but at some other place. JOHNSON.

143. *Good even.*] Thus the quarto. The folio—*Good dawning.* STEEVENS.

We should read with the folio—"Good dawning to thee, friend." The latter-end of this scene shews that it passed in the morning; for when Kent is placed in the stocks, Cornwall says, "There he shall sit 'till noon; and Regan replies, "'Till noon, 'till night!" and it passed very early in the morning; for Regan tells Gloster, in the preceding page, that she had been threading dark-ey'd night to come to him.

MONCK MASON.

150. ———*Lipsbury pinfold*———] The allusion which seems to be contained in this line I do not understand. In the violent eruption of reproaches which bursts from Kent in this dialogue, there are some epithets which the commentators have left unexpounded, and which I am not very able to make clear. Of a *three-suited knave* I know not the meaning, unless it be that he has different dresses for different occupations. *Lilly-liver'd* is cowardly; *white-blooded* and *white-liver'd* are still in vulgar use. A *one-trunk-inheriting slave*, I take to be a wearer of old cast-off clothes, an inheritor of torn breeches. JOHNSON.

I do not find the name of *Lipsbury*: it may be a cant phrase, with some corruption, taken from a place where the fines were arbitrary. *Three-suited* should, I believe, be *third-suited*, wearing clothes at the *third hand*. Edgar, in his pride, had *three suits* only. FARMER.

*Lipsbury*



*Lipsbury pinfold* may be a cant expression importing the same as *Lob's Pound*. So, in Massinger's *Duke of Milan*:

“To marry her, and say he was the party

“Found in *Lob's Pound*.”

A *Pinfold* is a *pound*. Thus in Gascoigne's *Dan Bartholomew of Bathe*, 1587:

“In such a *pin-folde* were his pleasures pent.”

*Three-suited knave* might mean, in an age of ostentatious finery like that of Shakspeare, one who had no greater change of rayment than *three suits* would furnish him with; so, in Ben Jonson's *Silent Woman*: “—wert a pitiful fellow, and hadst nothing but *three suits* of apparel:” or it may signify a fellow *thrice-sued at law*, who has *three suits* for debt standing out against him. Dr. Farmer would read *third* suited, *i. e.* at *third hand*. Edgar in his pride had *three suits*; but he says he had been a *serving-man*. A *one trunk-inheriting slave* may be used to signify a fellow, the whole of whose possessions are confined to *one coffer*, and that too *inherited* from his father, who was no better provided, or had nothing more to bequeath to his successor in poverty; a poor rogue hereditary, as *Timon* calls *Apemantus*. A *worsted-stocking knave* is another reproach of the same kind. The stockings in England, in the reign of queen Elizabeth (as I learn from Stubbs's *Anatomie of Abuses*, printed in 1595), were remarkably expensive, and scarce any other kind than silk were worn (even as this author says) by those who had not above forty shillings a year



year wages.—So, in an old comedy, called *The Hog hath lost his Pearl*, 1611, by R. Taylor:

“——good parts are no more set by in these times, than a good leg in a *woollen stocking*.”

Again, in *The Captain*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

“Green sicknesses, and serving-men light on you,

“With greasy breeches, and in *woollen stockings*.”

Again, in the *Miseries of inforc'd Marriage*, 1607:

Two sober young men come to claim their portion from their elder brother who is a spendthrift, and tell him:

“Our birth-right, good brother: this town craves maintenance; *silk stockings* must be had, &c.”

Silk stockings were not made in England till 1560, the second year of queen Elizabeth's reign. Of this extravagance Drayton takes notice in the 16th song of his *Polyolbion*:

“Which our plain fathers erst would have accounted sin,

“Before the costly coach and *silken stock* came in.”

STEEVENS.

158. ——*hundred-pound*——] A *hundred-pound gentleman* is a term of reproach used in Middleton's *Phœnix*, 1607.

STEEVENS.

159. ——*action-taking knave*;——] *i. e.* a fellow, who, if you beat him, would bring an action for the assault, instead of resenting it like a man of courage.

MONCK MASON.

166. ——*addition*.] *i. e.* titles. The act 1 Hen. V. ch. v. which directs that in certain writs, a description should be *added* to the name of the defendant, expressive



pressive of his estate, mystery, degree, &c. is called the statute of *Additions*. MALONE.

Kent is not only boisterous in his manners, but abusive in his language. His expressive ribaldry proceeds from an over solicitude to prevent being discovered : like St. Peter's swearing from a similar motive. HENLEY.

174. *I'll make a sop o' the moonshine of you.*] Perhaps here an equivoque was intended. In the *Old Shepherd's Kalendar*, among the dishes recommended for *Prymetyne*, "One is egges in moneshine." FARMER.

Again, in some verses within a letter of Howell's to Sir Thomas How :

Could I those whitely stars go nigh,  
Which make the milky way i' th' skie.  
I'd poach them, and as *moonshine* dress,

To make my Delia a curious mess. STEEVENS.

175. —*barber-monger*—] *Barber-monger* may mean, *dealer in the lower tradesmen*: a slur upon the steward, as taking fees for a recommendation to the business of the family. FARMER.

178. —*vanity the puppet's*—] Alluding to the mysteries or allegorical shews, in which vanity, iniquity, and other vices, were personified. JOHNSON.

So, in *Volpone, or The Fox*:

"Get you a cittern, Lady Vanity." STEEVENS.

The description is applicable only to the old *moralities*, between which and the *mysteries* there was an essential difference. REMARKS.



184. ———*neat slave*———] You mere slave, you very slave. JOHNSON.

*You neat slave*, I believe, means no more than *you finical rascal*, you who are an assemblage of *foppery and poverty*. Ben Jonson uses the same epithet in his *Poetaster* :

“ By thy leave, my *neat* scoundrel.” STEEVENS.

196. ———*nature* disclaims in thee ;] So, in R. Broome’s *Northern Lass*, 1633 :

“ ———I will *disclaim* in your favour hereafter.”

Again, in *The Case is Alter’d*, by Ben Jonson, 1609 :

“ Thus to *disclaim* in all th’ effects of pleasure.”

Again,

“ No, I *disclaim* in her, I spit at her.”

Again, in Warner’s *Albion’s England*, 1602. B. III. chap. xvi.

“ Not these, my lords, make me *disclaim* in it which all pursue.” STEEVENS.

206. *Thou whoreson zed! thou unnecessary letter!———]*

Zed is here probably used as a term of contempt, because it is the last letter in the English alphabet, and as its place may be supplied by S, and the Roman alphabet has it not; neither is it read in any word originally Teutonick. In Barret’s *Alvearie, or Quadruple Dictionary*, 1580, it is quite omitted, as the author affirms it to be rather a syllable than a letter.

STEEVENS.

*Thou whoreson zed! thou unnecessary letter.* This is taken from the grammarians of the time. Mulcaster says, “ Z is much harder amongst us, and seldom

E

seen :



seen:—S is become its *lieutenant-general*. It is lightlie expressed in English, saving in foren enfranchisments.”

FARMER.

208. ———into mortar,——] This expression was much in use in our author's time. So, Massinger, in his *New Way to pay old Debts*, Act I. sc. i.

“———I will help your memory,

“And tread thee into mortar.” STEEVENS.

*Unbolted* mortar is mortar made of unsifted lime, and therefore to break the lumps it is necessary to tread it by men in wooden shoes. This *unbolted* villain is therefore this *coarse* rascal. TOLLET.

217. *Like rats oft bite the holy cords atwaine,*

*Which are t' intrince, t' unloose;——*] Thus the first editors blundered this passage into unintelligible nonsense. Mr. Pope so far has disengaged it, as to give us plain sense; but by throwing out the epithet *holy*, it is evident that he was not aware of the poet's fine meaning. I will first establish and prove the reading, then explain the allusion. Thus the poet gave it:

Like rats, oft bite the *holy* cords in twain,

Too *intrinsicate* t' unloose:——

This word again occurs in our author's *Antony and Cleopatra*, where she is speaking to the aspick:

“———Come, mortal wretch;

“With thy sharp teeth this knot *intrinsicate*,

“Of life at once untie.”——

And we meet with it in *Cynthia's Revels*, by Ben Jonson.——Yet there are certain *punctilios*, or, as I may more nakedly



*nakedly insinuate them, certain intricate strokes and words, to which your activity is not yet amounted, &c.* It means, inward, hidden, perplex; as a knot, hard to be unravelled: it is derived from the Latin adverb *intrinsecus*; from which the Italians have coined a very beautiful phrase, *intrinsicarsi col une*, i. e. to grow intimate with, to wind one self into another. And now to our author's sense. Kent is rating the steward, as a parasite of Goneril's; and supposes very justly, that he has fomented the quarrel betwixt that princess and her father: in which office he compares him to a sacrilegious rat: and by a fine metaphor, as Mr. Warburton observed to me, styles the union between parents and children the *holy cords*. THEOBALD.

*Like rats oft bite the holy cords in twain*

*Too intricate t' unloose:—*] By these *holy cords* the poet means the natural union between parents and children. The metaphor is taken from the *cords of the sanctuary*; and the fomenters of family differences are compared to these sacrilegious rats. The expression is fine and noble. WARBURTON.

*Too intricate t' unloose:]* The word that Mr. Theobald has restored, and which is undoubtedly the true reading, was but newly introduced into the language, when this play was written. See the preface to Marston's *Scourge of Villanie*, 1598: "I know he will vouchsafe it some of his *new-minted* epithets; as *real*, intricate, *Delphicke*," &c. MALONE.

218. —sooth every passion] *Sooth* is the reading of neither the folio nor the quarto; in both of which



we find *smooth*, which is, I think, the true reading. So, in *Sir John Oldcastle*, 1600 :

“ Traitor unto his country ! how he *smooth’d*,

“ And seem’d as innocent as truth itself !

Again, in our author’s *Pericles*, 1609 :

“ The sinful father

“ Seem’d not to strike, but *smooth*.”

*Sooth* was first introduced by Mr. Pope. MALONE.

221. ————*and turn their halcyon beaks*

*With ev’ry gale and vary of their masters ;]*

The *halcyon* is the bird otherwise called the *king-fisher*. The vulgar opinion was, that this bird, if hung up, would *vary* with the wind, and by that means shew from what point it blew.

So, in Marlow’s *Jew of Malta*, 1633 :

“ But how now stands the wind ?

“ Into what corner peers my *Halcyon’s bill* ?”

STEEVENS.

224. ————*epileptic visage !]* The frightened countenance of a man ready to fall in a fit. JOHNSON.

227. ————*Camelot.*] In Somersetshire, near Camelot, are many large moors, where are bred great quantities of geese, so that many other places are from hence supplied with quills and feathers.

HANMER.

Mr. Blake observes, that in an ancient map of Enfield-Chace, &c. the name of *Camelot* is given to a large pond, which in all probability was once a place where *geese* were bred. MALONE.



230. *No contraries hold more antipathy,  
Than I and such a knave.*] Hence Mr. Pope's  
expression:

“The strong antipathy of good to bad.”

TOLLET.

233. ———likes *me not.*] *i. e.* pleases me not.

STEEVENS.

See *Likes*, catch-word Alphabet.

241. ———constrains the garb

*Quite from his nature.*———] Forces his *outside* or his *appearance* to something totally *different from* his natural disposition.

JOHNSON.

247. *Than twenty silly ducking observants,*] *Silly* means *simple*, or *rustick*. So, in *Cymbeline*, act v. scene 3:

“There was a fourth man in a *silly* habit.” meaning Posthumus in the dress of a peasant. *Nicely is foolishly.* Niais. Fr.

STEEVENS.

252. *On flickering Phœbus' front—*] Dr. Johnson in his *Dictionary* says this word means to *flutter*. I meet with it in *The History of Clyomon, Knight of the Golden Shield*, 1599:

“By flying force of *flickering* fame your grace shall understand.”

Again, in *The Pilgrim* of Beaumont and Fletcher:

“———some castrel

“That hovers over her, and dares her daily;

“Some *flickring* slave.”———

Stanyhurst, in his translation of the fourth book of Virgil's *Æneid*, 1532, describes Iris,



“ From the sky down *flickering*,” &c.

And again in the old play, entitled, *Fuimus Troes*, 1633 :

“ With gaudy pennons *flickering* in the air.”

STEEVENS.

Dr. Johnson's interpretation is too vague for the purpose. To *flicker* is indeed to *flutter* ; but in a particular manner, which may be better exemplified by the motion of a *flame*, than explained by any verbal description.

HENLEY.

257. ——— *though I should win your displeasure to entreat me to't.*] Though I should win you, displeased as you now are, to like me so well as to entreat me to be a knave.

JOHNSON.

*To entreat me to't.*] *i. e.* to become a plain knave and flatter you.

HENLEY.

263. *Conjunct* is the reading of the old quartos ; *compact*, of the folio.

STEEVENS.

268. *Fleshment*] A young soldier is said to *flesh* his sword, the first time he draws blood with it, *fleshment*, therefore, is here metaphorically applied to the first act of service which Kent, in his new capacity, had performed for his master ; and, at the same time, in a sarcastick sense, as though he had esteemed it an heroick exploit to trip a man behind, that was actually falling.

HENLEY.

271. *But Ajax is their fool.*] *Their fool* means here, their *butt*, their *laughing-stock*. These finical puppies (says Kent), these *rogues and cowards*, never meet with a man superior to themselves, but they make him



their jest, like *Ajax* with *Thersites*. Shakspeare's idea of *Ajax* may be seen in his *Troilus and Cressida*, where he is the *fool* of the play, and the constant object of *Thersites*' ridicule, for a *scurvy valiant ass*, *Mars's idiot*, &c. STEEVENS.

Mr. Monck Mason explains the passage thus: *Ajax* is a fool to them, there are none of these knaves and cowards, that if you believe themselves are not so brave, that *Ajax* is a fool compared to them; alluding to the steward's account of their quarrel, where he says of Kent, This ancient ruffian, whose life I have spared in pity to his beard. When a man is compared to one who excels him very much in any art or quality, it is a vulgar expression to say, He is but a fool to him.

272. —*stocks*] This is not the first time that stocks had been introduced on the stage. In *Hick-Scorner*, which was printed early in the reign of K. Henry VIII. *Pity* is put into them, and left there till he is freed by *Perseveraunce* and *Contemplacyon*. STEEVENS.

273. —ancient *knave*.] Two of the quartos read —*miscreant* knave, and one of them—*unreverent*, instead of *reverend*. STEEVENS.

287. —colour.] The quartos read, *nature*.

STEEVENS.

290. *His fault*—] All from these words, to *are punish'd with*, is omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

292. —*the meanest*—] This is a conjectural emendation by Mr. Pope. The quartos read—and *temnest*, perhaps, for *contemned'st*. STEEVENS.



300. I know not whether this circumstance of putting Kent in the *stocks* be not ridiculed in the punishment of Numps, in Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew-Fair*.

It should be remembered, that formerly in great houses, as still in some colleges, there were moveable *stocks* for the correction of the servants. FARMER.

304. *Will not be rubb'd, nor stopp'd.*——] Metaphor from bowling. WARBURTON.

310. *Good king, that must approve the common saw !]* That art now to exemplify the common proverb, *That out of, &c.* That changest better for worse. Hanmer observes, that it is a proverbial saying, applied to those who are turned out of house and home to the open weather. It was, perhaps, first used of men dismissed from an hospital, or house of charity, such as was erected formerly in many places for travellers. Those houses had names properly enough alluded to by *heaven's benediction*. JOHNSON.

The *saw* alluded to, is in Heywood's *Dialogues on Proverbs*, book II. chap. v.

“ In your renning from him to me, ye runne

“ *Out of God's blessing into the warme sunne.*”

TYRWHITT.

315. —— *Nothing almost sees miracles,*] Thus the folio. The quartos read—*Nothing almost sees my wrack.* STEEVENS.

318. ————— *and shall find time*

*From this enormous state, seeking to give*

*Losses their remedies* —————] I confess I do

not understand this passage, unless it may be considered



dered as *divided parts of Cordelia's letter*, which he is reading to himself by moonlight: it certainly conveys the sense of what she would have said. In reading a letter, it is natural enough to dwell on those circumstances in it that promise the change in our affairs which we most wish for; and Kent having read Cordelia's assurances that she will find a time to free the injured from the *enormous* misrule of Regan, is willing to go to sleep with that pleasing reflection uppermost in his mind. But this is mere conjecture.

STEEVENS.

It seems to me, that the verb, *shall find*, is not governed by the word Cordelia, but by the pronoun *I*, in the beginning of the sentence; and that the words, *from this enormous state*, do not refer to Cordelia, but to Kent himself, dressed like a clown, and condemned to the stocks—an enormous state indeed for a man of his high rank.

The difficulty of this passage has arisen from a mistake in all the former editors, who have printed these three lines as if they were a quotation from Cordelia's letter, whereas they are in fact the words of Kent himself; let the reader consider them in that light, as part of Kent's own speech, the obscurity is at an end, and the meaning is clearly this: —“I know that the letter is from Cordelia (who hath been informed of my obscured course), and shall gain time, by this strange disguise and situation, which I shall employ in seeking to remedy our present losses.

MONCK MASON.

Notwith-



Notwithstanding the ingenuity and confidence of Mr. Mason (who has not however done justice to his own idea), I cannot but concur with Mr. Steevens, in ascribing these broken expressions to the letter of Cordelia.—For, if the words were Kent's, there will be no intimation from the letter that can give the least insight to Cordelia's design; and the only apparent purport of it will be, to tell Kent that she knew his situation. But exclusive of this consideration, What hopes could Kent entertain, in a condition so deplorable as his—unless Cordelia should take an opportunity, from the anarchy of the kingdom, and the broils subsisting between Albany and Cornwall—of *finding a time, to give losses their remedies*?—Curan had before mentioned to Edmund, the rumour of *Wars toward*, between these dukes. This report had reached Cordelia, who, having also discovered the situation and fidelity of Kent, writes to inform him, that she should avail herself of the first opportunity which the enormities of the times might offer, of restoring him to her father's favour, and her father to his kingdom. [See act iii. sc. 1. act iv. sc. 3.]

HENLEY.

333. ———*elf all my hair in knots*;) Hair, thus knotted, was vulgarly supposed to be the work of *elves* and fairies in the night. So, in *Romeo and Juliet* :

“ ———plats the manes of horses in the night,

“ And bakes the *elf-locks* in foul sluttish hairs,

“ Which, once untangled, much misfortune  
bodes.”

STEEVENS.

337.



337. *Of Bedlam-beggars,*] In the *Bell-man of London*, by Decker, 5th edit. 1640, is the following account of one of these characters, under the title of an *Abraham-Man*: “——he sweares he hath been in Bedlam, and will talke frantickely of purpose: you see *pinnes* stuck in sundry places of his naked flesh, especially in his *armes*, which paine he gladly puts himselfe to, on’y to make you believe he is out of his wits. He calles himselfe by the name of *Poore Tom*, and comming near any body cries out, *Poor Tom is a-cold*. Of these *Abraham-Men*, some be exceeding merry, and doe nothing but sing songs fashioned out of their owne braines: some will dance, others will doe nothing but either laugh or weepe: others are dogged, and so sullen both in loke and speech, that spying but a small company in a house, they boldly and bluntly enter, *compelling* the servants through feare to give them what they demand.” To *sham Abraham*, a cant term, still in use among sailors and the vulgar, may have this origin. STEEVENS.

339. ——*wooden pricks,*] *i. e.* skewers. So, in *The Wyll of the Deuyll*, bl. let. no date. “I give to the butchers, &c. *pricks* inough to set up their thin meate, that it may appeare thicke and well fedde.”

STEEVENS.

The *euonymus*, of which the best skewers are made, is called *prick wood*. MONCK MASON.

340. ——*low farms,*] The quartos read, *low service*.

STEEVENS.



341. *Poor pelting villages*—] *Pelting* is, I believe, only an accidental depravation of *petty*. Shakspeare uses it in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* of *small brooks*. JOHNSON.

Beaumont and Fletcher often use the word in the same sense as Shakspeare. So in *King and No King*, act iv.

“ This *pelting*, prating piece is good for nothing.” *Spanish Curate*, act ii. sc. ult.—“ To learn the *pelting* law.” Shakspeare’s *Midsummer Night's Dream*—“ every *pelting* river.” *Measure for Measure*, act ii. scene. 7.

“ And every *pelting* petty officer.”

Again, in *Troilus and Cressida*, Hector says to Achilles :

“ We have had *pelting* wars since you refus’d

“ The Grecian cause.”

From the first of the two last instances it appears not to be a corruption of *petty*, which is used the next word to it, but seems to be the same as *paltry*. STEEVENS.

342. ———*lunatick bans*,] To *ban*, is to curse.

So, in *Mother Bombie*, 1594, a comedy by Lilly :

“ Well, be as be may is no *banning*.”

So, in *Arden of Feversham*, 1592 :

“ Nay, if those *ban*, let me breathe curses forth.”

STEEVENS.

343. ———*poor Turlygood ! poor Tom !*] We should read *Turlupin*. In the fourteenth century there was a new species of gipsies, called *Turlupius*, a fraternity of naked beggars, which ran up and down Europe. However, the church of Rome hath dignified



nified them with the name of *hereticks*, and actually burned some of them at Paris. But what sort of religionists they were, appears from Genebrard's account of them : “ Turlupin Cynicorum sectam suscitantes, de nuditate pudendorum, & publico coitu.” Plainly, nothing but a band of *Tom-o'-Bedlams*.

WARBURTON.

Hanmer reads, *poor Turlurù*. It is probable the word *Turlygood* was the common corrupt pronunciation.

JOHNSON.

344. — *Edgar I nothing am.*] As Edgar I am outlawed, dead in law ; I have no longer any political existence.

JOHNSON.

The critick's idea is both too complex and too puerile for one in Edgar's situation. He is pursued, it seems, and proclaimed, *i. e.* a reward has been offered for taking or killing him. In assuming this character, says he, I may preserve myself; as Edgar, I am inevitably gone.

REMARKS.

352. *No, my lord.*] Omitted in the quartos.

STEEVENS.

353. — *he wears cruel garters.*—] I believe a quibble was here intended. *Crewel* signifies *worsted*, of which garters, &c. are made ; and it is used in that sense in the comedy of *The Two angry Women of Abington*, printed 1599 :

“ ——— I'll warrant you, he'll have

“ His *cruell* garters cross about the knee.”

So again, in *The Bird in a Cage*, 1633 :

F

“ I speak



“ I speak the prologue to our silk and *cruel*

“ Gentlemen in the hangings. STEEVENS.

356. —*over-lusty*, in this place, has a double signification. *Lustiness* anciently meant *sauciness*.

So, in Decker's *If this be not a good Play the Devil is in it*, 1612 :

“ —upon pain of being plagued for their *lustyness*.”

Again, in *Claudius Tiberius Nero*, 1607 :

“ ——— she'll snarl and bite,

“ And take up Nero for his *lustiness*.”

Again, in sir Thomas North's translation of *Plutarch* :

“ Cassius' soldiers did shewe themselves verie stubborne and *lustie* in the campe,” &c. STEEVENS.

357. ————*then he wears wooden nether-stocks.*] *Nether-stocks* is the old word for *stockings*. *Breeches* were at that time called “men's *overstockes*,” as I learn from Barret's *Alvearie, or Quadruple Dictionary*, 1580.

It appears from the following passage in the second part of *The Map of Mock Beggar Hall*, &c. an ancient ballad, that the stockings were formerly sewed to the breeches :

“ Their fathers went in homely frees,

“ And good plain broad cloth breeches ;

“ Their stockings with the same agrees,

“ Sow'd on with good strong stitches.”

Stubbs, in his *Anatomic of Abuses*, has a whole chapter on *The Diversitie of Nether-Stockes worne in England*,



England, 1595. Heywood among his *Epigrams*, 1562, has the following:

“Thy *upper-stocks*, be they stufte with silke or  
flocks,

“Never become thee like a *nether paire of stocks*.”

Again, in Reginald Scott's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1585:

“—to cover the pot with my right *netherstock*.”

STEEVENS.

366. *Lear*.] This and the next speech are omitted in the folio.

STEEVENS.

369. *By Juno, I swear, ay*.] Omitted in the quartos.

STEEVENS.

372. *To do upon respect such violent outrage*:] To violate the publick and venerable character of a messenger from the king.

JOHNSON.

382. *Deliver'd letters, spight of intermission*,] *Spight of intermission* is without pause, without suffering time to intervene. So, in *Macbeth*:

“———gentle heaven,

“Cut short all *intermission*,” &c. STEEVENS.

384. *They summ'd up their meiny*——] *Meiny*, i. e. people.

POPE.

*Mesne*, a house. *Mesnie*, a family, Fr.

So, in *Monsieur D'Olive*, 1606.

“———if she, or her sad *meiny*,

“Be towards sleep, I'll wake them.”

Again, in the bl. let. Romance of *Syr Eglamoure of Artoys*, no date:

“Of the emperoure took he leave ywys,

“And of all the *meiny* that was there.”



Again:

“ Here cometh the king of Israel,

“ With a fayre *meinye*.”

STEEVENS.

Though the word *meiny* be now obsolete, the word *menial*, which is derived from it, is still in use. On *whose* contents, means the contents of which.

MONCK MASON.

395. *Winter's not gone yet, &c.*] If this be their behaviour, the king's troubles are not yet at an end.

JOHNSON.

This speech is omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

402. ————*dolours*.] Quibble intended between *dolours* and *dollars*.

HANMER.

The same quibble had occurred in *The Tempest*, and in *Measure for Measure*.

STEEVENS.

404. *Oh, how this mother, &c.*] *Lear* here affects to pass off the swelling of his heart ready to burst with grief and indignation, for the disease called the *Mother*, or *Hysterica Passio*, which, in our author's time, was not thought peculiar to women only. In Harsnet's *Declaration of Popish Impostures*, Richard Mainy, Gent. one of the pretended demoniacs, deposes, p. 263, that the first night that he came to Denham, the seat of Mr. Peckham, where these impostures were managed, he was somewhat evill at ease, and he grew worse and worse with an old disease that he had, and which the priests persuaded him was from the possession of the devil, viz. “ The disease I spake of was a spice of the *Mother*, where-with I had bene troubled . . . before my going into Fraunce :



Fraunce: whether I doe rightly term it the *Mother* or no, I knowe not . . . When I was sick of this disease in Fraunce, a Scottish doctor of physick, then in Paris, called it, as I remember, *Vertiginem Capitis*. It riseth . . . of a winde in the bottome of the belly, and proceeding with a great swelling, causeth a very painfull collicke in the stomack, and an extraordinary giddines in the head.”

It is at least very probable, that Shakspeare would not have thought of making Lear affect to have the *Hysterick Passion*, or *Mother*, if this passage in Harsnet’s pamphlet had not suggested it to him, when he was selecting the other particulars from it, in order to furnish out his character of Tom of Bedlam, to whom this demoniacal gibberish is admirably adapted.

PERCY.

416. *All that follow their noses are led by their eyes, but blind men; and there’s not a nose among twenty, but can smell, &c.*] The word *twenty* refers to the noses of the *blind men*, and not to the men in general.

STEEVENS.

422. — *when a wise man gives thee, &c.*] One cannot too much commend the caution which our moral poet uses, on all occasions, to prevent his sentiment from being perversely taken. So here, having given an ironical precept in commendation of perfidy and base desertion of the unfortunate, for fear it should be understood seriously, though delivered by his buffoon or jester, he has the precaution to add this beautiful corrective, full of fine sense:—“I

F i i j

would



would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.”

WARBURTON.

430. *But I will tarry ; the fool will stay,*

*And let, &c.]* I think this passage erroneous, though both the copies concur. The sense will be mended if we read :

But I will tarry ; the fool will stay,

And let the wise man fly ;

The fool turns knave, that runs away ;

The knave no fool————

That I stay with the king is a proof that I am a fool, the wise men are deserting him. There is knavery in this desertion, but there is no folly. JOHNSON.

447. *Glo.]* This, with the following speech, is omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

453. —*Tell the hot duke, that——]* The quartos read—Tell the hot duke, that *Lear*———— STEEVENS.

464. *Is practice only.———]* *Practice* is in Shakspeare, and other old writers, used commonly in an ill sense for *unlawful artifice*. JOHNSON.

471. —*the cockney]* It is not easy to determine the exact power of this term of contempt, which, as the editor of the *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer observes, might have been originally borrowed from the kitchen. From the ancient ballad of the *Turnament of Tottenham*, published by Dr. Percy in his second volume of *Ancient Poetry*, p. 24, it should seem to signify a *cook* :

“ At that feast were they served in rich array ;

“ Every five and five had a *cokenay*.”

i. e. a *cook*, or *scullion*, to attend them.

Shakspeare,



Shakspeare, however, in *Twelfth Night*, makes his Clown say, “I am afraid this great lubber the world, will prove a *cockney*.” In this place it seems to have a signification not unlike that which it bears at present; and, indeed, Chaucer in his *Reve’s Tale*, ver. 4205, appears to employ it with such a meaning:

“And when this jape is tald another day,

“I shall be halden a daffe or a *cokenay*.”

Meres likewise, in the second part of his *Wit’s Commonwealth*, 1598, observes, that “many *cockney* and wanton women are often sick, but in faith they cannot tell where.” Decker also, in his *Newes from Hell*, &c. 1606, has the following passage, “’Tis not their fault, but our mother’s, our *cockering* mothers, who for their labour made us to be called *cockneys*.” See the notes on the *Canterbury Tales of Chaucer*, vol. iv. p. 253. where the reader will meet with more information on this subject. STEEVENS.

Dr. Percy imagines it signifies a *cook*, in the ballad of the *Turnament of Tottenham*:

“Every five and five had a *cokenay*.”

Certainly it cannot be a cook or scullion, but is some dish which I cannot ascertain. My authority is the following epigram from Davies:

“He that comes every day, shall have a *cocknay*,

“And he that comes but now and then, shall have a fat hen.”

Ep. on Engl. Prov. 179.

WHALLEY.



472. ———the eels, when she put them i' the paste——] Hinting that the eel and Lear are in the same danger.

JOHNSON.

This reference is not sufficiently explained.—The *paste*, or *crust of a pie*, in Shakspeare's time, was called a *coffin*.

HENLEY.

See catch-word Alphabet.

482. *sepulchring*, &c.] This word is accented in the same manner by *Fairfax* and *Milton*:

“As if his work should his *sepulcher* be,”

C. i. st. 25.

“And so *sepulcher'd* in such pomp doe lie.”

*Milton on Shakspeare*, l. xv. STEEVENS.

484. ————she hath tied

*Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture here,*]

Alluding to the fable of *Prometheus*. WARBURTON.

487. Of how deprav'd a quality——] Thus the quarto. The folio reads,

*With how deprav'd a quality——* JOHNSON.

490. *Than she to scant her duty.*] The word *scant* is directly contrary to the sense intended. The quarto reads, *slack*. You less know how to value her desert, than she (knows) to *scant* her duty, *i. e.* than she can be capable of being wanting in her duty.

STEEVENS.

491. *Say*, &c.] This, as well as the following speech, is omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

507. *Do you but mark how this becomes the house?*] Becomes the *house*; *i. e.* the order of families, duties of relations.

WARBURTON



Dr. Warburton's explanation may be supported by the following extract from Sir Thomas Smith's *Commonwealth of England*, 4to. 1601. chap. ii. "They two together [man and wife] ruleth the *house*. The *house* I call here, the man, the woman, their children, their servants, bond and free," &c. TOLLET.

Again, in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*:—"The gentleman's wife one day could not refraine (beholding a stagges head set up in the gentleman's house) from breaking into a laughter before his face, saying how that head *became the house* very well." HENDERSON.

509. *Age is unnecessary*:—"Age is unnecessary, may mean, *old people are useless*. So, in *The Old Law*, by Massinger:

"——your laws extend not to desert,

"But to *unnecessary* years; and, my lord,

"His are not such." STEEVENS.

*Unnecessary* in Lear's speech, I believe, means—in want of necessities, unable to procure them.

TYRWHITT.

514. *Look'd black upon me*;—"To look black, may easily be explained to look cloudy or gloomy.

JOHNSON.

So Holinshed, vol. iii. p. 1157: "——The bishops thereat repined, and *looked black*." TOLLET.

523. To *fall, and blast her pride*!] Thus the quarto: The folio reads not so well, *to fall and blister*. I think there is still a fault, which may be easily mended by changing a letter:

——Infect



—————Infect her beauty,

You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,  
Do fall, and blast her pride!                      JOHNSON.

I see no occasion for Dr. Johnson's alteration. The plain meaning is this, "You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn up by the sun in order to fall down again and blast her pride."                      MONCK MASON.

Shakspeare certainly could never intend Lear to utter the nonsense here ascribed to him. According to this gentleman's explanation, there was at hand a stock of ready made fogs, which the sun had taken care to provide for the nonce, and the only thing left for Lear, was to summon them to their office.—The slight alteration proposed by Dr. Johnson hath restored sense and beauty to the passage, and made it consistent with the context.                      \* \* \*.

525. —————*when the rash mood is on.*] Thus the folio. The quartos read only———*when the rash mood*———perhaps leaving the sentence purposely unfinished.                      STEEVENS.

527. *Thy tender-hefted nature*———] *Hefted* seems to mean the same as *heaved*. *Tender-hefted*, i. e. whose bosom is agitated by tender passions. The formation of such a participle, I believe, cannot be grammatically accounted for. Shakspeare uses *hefts* for *hevings* in *The Winter's Tale*, act ii. Both the quartos however read, "tender-*hested* nature;" which may mean a nature which is governed by gentle dispositions. *Hest* is an old word signifying *command*. So, in *The Wars of Cyrus*, &c. 1594:

"Must



“ Must yield to *hest* of others that be free.”

*Hested* is the reading of the folio. STEEVENS.

532. ———to scant my sizes.] To contract my allowances or proportions settled. JOHNSON.

A *sizer* is one of the lowest rank of students at Cambridge, and lives on a stated allowance.

Sizes are certain portions of bread, beer, or other victuals, which in publick societies are set down to the account of particular persons: a word still used in colleges. STEEVENS.

See a *size* in Minshew's *Dictionary*. TOLLET.

549. *If you do love old men, if your sweet sway  
Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,*]

Mr. Upton has proved by irresistable authority, that to *allow*, signifies not only to *permit*, but to *approve*, and has deservedly replaced the old reading, which Dr. Warburton had changed into *hallozo obedience*, not recollecting the scripture expression, *The Lord alloweth the righteous*, Psalm xi. ver. 6. So, in Greene's *Never too Late*, 1616:—“ she *allows* of thee for love, not for lust.” Again, in Greene's *Farewell to Follie*, 1617: “ I *allow* those pleasing poems of Guazzo, which begin, &c.” STEEVENS.

560. ———much less advancement] Cornwall certainly means, that Kent's *disorders* had entitled him even a post of less honour than the stocks.

STEEVENS.

562. *I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.*] The meaning is, since you are *weak*, be content to think yourself weak. JOHNSON.

569.



569. *No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose  
To wage against the enmity o' the air ;]* To  
*wage* is often used absolutely without the word *war*  
after it, and yet signifies *to make war* ; as before in this  
play :

My life I never held but as a pawn

To *wage* against thine enemies.

572. *Necessity's sharp pinch !—]* These words ap-  
pear to be the reflection of Lear on the wretched sort  
of existence he had described in the preceding lines.

STEEVENS.

576. *——base life—]* *i. e.* In a servile state.

JOHNSON.

577. *——and sumpter]* *Sumpter* is a horse that  
carries necessaries on a journey.

STEEVENS.

585. *———thou art a bile,*

*A plague sore, an embossed carbuncle,*

*In my corrupted blood.]* The context clearly  
shows that we ought to read—*boil*. So, in *Coriolanus* :

“ *———boils and plagues*

“ *Plaster you o'er !”*

The word *boil*, being pronounced as if written *bile*,  
occasioned the mistake. In the folio, both here and  
in *Coriolanus*, it is spelt in the same manner—*byle*.

MALONE.

586. *———embossed carbuncle,]* *Embossed* is swelling,  
*protuberant*.

JOHNSON.

621. *Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favour'd,  
When others are more wicked,——]* A similar  
thought occurs in *Cymbeline*, act v.

“ *——it*



“ —————it is I

“ That all the abhorred things o’ the earth named,

“ By being worse than they.” STEEVENS.

*To be not the worst* deserves some praise.

TYRWHITT.

639. ———*poor old man,*] The quarto has, *poor old fellow.* JOHNSON.

643. ———*touch me with noble anger!*] It would puzzle one at first to find the sense, the drift, and the coherence of this petition. For if the gods sent this evil for his punishment, how could he expect that they should defeat their own design, and assist him to revenge his injuries? The solution is, that Shakspeare here makes his speaker allude to what the ancient poets tell us of the misfortunes of particular families: namely, that when the anger of the gods, for an act of impiety, was raised against an offending house, their method of punishment was, first to inflame the breasts of the children to unnatural acts against their parents; and then, of the parents against their children, in order to destroy one another; and that both these outrages were at the instigation of the gods. To consider Lear as alluding to this divinity, makes his prayer exceeding pertinent and fine. WARBURTON.

647. ———*I will do such things*—————

*What they are, yet I know not;*]

—————*magnum est quodcunque peravi,*

*Quid sit, adhuc dubito.* Ovid. Met. lib. vi.

—————*haud quid sit scio,*

*Sed grande quiddam est.*

Senecæ Thyestes.



Let such as are unwilling to allow that copiers of nature must occasionally use the same thoughts and expressions, remember, that of both these authors there were early translations. STEEVENS.

665. *Whither is he going?*

Glo. *He calls to horse;*] Omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

670. *Do sorely ruffle*—] Thus the folio. The quartos read, *Do sorely russel*, i. e. *rustle*. STEEVENS.

*Ruffle* is certainly the true reading. A *ruffler*, in our author's time, was a noisy, *boisterous* swaggerer.

MALONE.

### ACT III.

Line 6. *O R swell the curled waters 'bove the main,*] The *main* seems to signify here the *main land*, the *continent*. So, in *Bacon's War with Spain*: "In 1589, we turned challengers, and invaded the *main* of Spain."

This interpretation sets the two objects of Lear's desire in proper opposition to each other. He wishes for the destruction of the world, either by the winds blowing the land into the waters, or raising the waters so as to overwhelm the land. STEEVENS.

The old reading, and Mr. Steevens's explanation of it, are strongly confirmed by a passage in *Troilus and Cressida*:

"— The



“ ————— The bounded waters

“ Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores,

“ And make a sop of all this solid globe.”

The main is again used for the land, in *Hamlet* :

“ Goes it against the main of Poland, Sir ?”

MALONE.

7. ————tears his white hair ;] The six following verses were omitted in all the late editions : I have replaced them from the first, for they are certainly Shakspeare’s. POPE.

The first folio ends the speech at *change or cease*, and begins again at Kent’s question, *But who is with him ?* The whole speech is forcible, but too long for the occasion, and properly retrenched. JOHNSON.

12. *This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch,*] *Cub-drawn* has been explained to signify *drawn by nature to its young* ; whereas it means, *whose dugs are drawn dry by its young*. For no animals leave their dens by night but for prey. So that the meaning is, “ that even hunger, and the support of its young, would not force the bear to leave his den in such a night.”

WARBURTON.

Shakspeare has the same image in *As You Like It* :

“ A lioness, with udders all drawn dry,

“ Lay couching.” ————

Again,

“ Food to the suck’d and hungry lioness.”

STEEVENS.

20. ————my note,] My observation of your character.

JOHNSON.



The quartos read :

————upon the warrant of my *art* :

*i. e.* on the strength of *my skill* in physiognomy.

STEEVENS.

24. *Who have (as who have not, ———)]* The eight subsequent verses were degraded by Mr. Pope as unintelligible, and to no purpose. For my part, I see nothing in them but what is very easy to be understood ; and the lines seem absolutely necessary to clear up the motives upon which France prepared his invasion : nor without them is the sense of the context complete.

THEOBALD.

The quartos omit these lines.

STEEVENS.

27. ———*what hath been seen,*] What follows, are the circumstances in the state of the kingdom, of which he supposes the spies gave France the intelligence.

STEEVENS.

28. *Either in snuffs or packings——)]* *Snuffs* are dislikes, and *packings* underhand contrivances.

So, in *Henry IV.* first part : “ Took it in *snuff* ; ” and in *King Edward III.* 1599 :

“ This *packing* evil, we both shall tremble for it.”

Again, in Stanyhurst’s *Virgil*, 1582 :

“ With two gods *packing* one woman silly to cozen.”

We still talk of *packing* juries, and Antony says of Cleopatra, that she has “ *pack’d* cards with Cæsar.”

STEEVENS.

31. ———*are but furnishings.]* A *furnish* anciently signified a *sample*. So, in the Preface to Greene’s



Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*, 1621: "To lend the world a *furnish* of wit, she lays her own to pawn."

STEEVENS.

32. *But, true it is, &c.*] In the old editions are the five following lines which I have inserted in the text, as they seem necessary to the plot, and preparatory to the arrival of the French army with Cordelia, in act iv. How both these, and a whole scene between Kent and this gentleman, in the fourth act, came to be left out in all the later editions, I cannot tell; they depend upon each other, and very much contribute to clear that incident. POPE.

32. ——— *from France there comes a power  
Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,  
Wise in our negligence, have secret sea  
In some of our best ports ———*] This speech,

as it now stands, is collected from two editions: the eight lines, degraded by Mr. Pope, are found in the folio, not in the quarto; the following lines enclosed in crotchets are in the quarto, not in the folio. So that if the speech be read with omission of the former, it will stand according to the first edition; and if the former are read, and the lines that follow them omitted, it will then stand according to the second. The speech is now tedious, because it is formed by a coalition of both. The second edition is generally best, and was probably nearest to Shakspeare's last copy, but in this passage the first is preferable; for in the folio, the messenger is sent, he knows not why, he knows not whither. I suppose Shakspeare thought his



plot opened rather too early, and made the alteration to veil the event from the audience; but trusting too much to himself, and full of a single purpose, he did not accommodate his new lines to the rest of the scene.—*Scattered* naturally means *divided, unsettled, disunited*.—Warburton has offered with great pomp a change of *sea* to *seize*; but in the first edition the word is *fee*, for *hire*, in the sense of having any one in *fee*, that is, *at devotion for money*. *Fee* is in the second quarto changed to *see*, from which one made *sea* and another *seize*. JOHNSON.

One of the quartos (for there are two that differ from each other, though printed in the same year, and for the same printer) reads *secret feet*. Perhaps the author wrote *secret foot*, i. e. footing. So, in a following scene:

—what confederacy have you with the traitors

Late *footed* in the kingdom? STEEVENS.

That *foot* is the true reading is, I think, clearly ascertained, both by the passage quoted by Mr. Steevens, and another in the third act, which is still more apposite:—"these injuries the king now bears, will be revenged home; there is part of *a power* already *footed*: we must incline to the king."

Again, in *Coriolanus*:

"——Why, thou Mars, I'll tell thee,

"We have *a power on foot*." MALONE.

56. ——the king, in which your pain,

That way, I'll this: he that first, &c.] Thus the folio. The quartos read:

That



That when we have found the king,  
I'll this way, you that, he that first lights  
On him, hollow the other. STEEVENS.

62. ———*thought-executing*———] Doing execution  
with rapidity equal to thought. JOHNSON.

63. *Vaunt-couriers.*] *Avant couriers*, Fr. This phrase  
is not unfamiliar to other writers of Shakspeare's time.  
It originally meant the foremost scouts of an army.  
So, in Jarvis Markham's *English Arcadia*, 1607:

“—As soon as the first *vancurrer* encountered him  
face to face.”

Again, in *The Tragedy of Mariam*, 1613:

“ Might to my death, but the *vaunt-currier*  
prove.”

Again, in *Darius*, 1603:

“ Th' *avaunt-corours*, that came for to examine.”  
STEEVENS.

65. Strike *flat*, &c.] The quarto reads—*Smite flat*,  
STEEVENS.

66. *Crack nature's moulds; all germins spill at once,*]  
The old editions all gave *germains*. Mr. Theobald  
restored the sense of the passage, and supported his  
emendation by producing the same thought from the  
*Winter's Tale*:

“ Let nature crush the sides o' the earth together,  
“ And mar the *seeds* within”———

which Mr. Steevens hath further confirmed, by point-  
ing out in *Macbeth* the occurrence of the word:

“ ———and the sum  
“ Of nature's *germins* tumble together.” HENLEY.



66. ——spill *at once*,] To *spill* is to destroy. So, in Gower *De Confessione Amantis*, lib. iv. fol. 67:

“So as I shall myself *spill*.” STEEVENS.

68. ——court *holy-water*——] Ray, among his proverbial phrases, p. 184. mentions *court holy-water* to mean *fair words*. The French have the same phrase. *Eau benite de cour*; fair empty words.—*Chambaud's Dictionary*. STEEVENS.

76. *You owe me no subscription*;——] *Subscription* for obedience. WARBURTON.

So in Rowley's *Search for Money*, 1690, p. 17. “I tell yee besides this he is an obstinat wilfull fellow, for since this idolatrous adoration given to him here by men, he has kept the scepter in his owne hand and commands every man: which rebellious man now seeing (or rather indeed too obedient to him) inclines to all his hests, *yeelds no subscription*, nor will he be commanded by any other power,” &c. REED.

88. *So beggars marry many*.] *i. e.* A beggar marries a wife and lice. JOHNSON.

That is, “So many beggars marry;” meaning, that they marry in the manner he has described, before they have houses to put their heads in.

MONCK MASON.

95. *No, I will be the pattern of all patience, I will say nothing*.] So Perillus, in the old anonymous play, speaking of *Leir*:

“But he, the myrrour of mild patience,

“Puts up all wrongs, and never gives reply.”

STEEVENS.



98. —and a cod-piece, *that's a wise man and a fool.*] Alluding perhaps to the saying of a contemporary wit; that there is *no discretion below the girdle.*

STEEVENS.

100. ——are you here?——] The quartos read—*sit you here?*

STEEVENS.

102. Gallow *the very wanderers of the dark,*] *Gallow*, a west-country word, signifies to scare or frighten.

WARBURTON.

So, the Somersetshire proverb: “The dunder do *gally* the beans.” Beans are vulgarly supposed to shoot up faster after thunder-storms.

STEEVENS.

By some late experiments, it has been discovered, that this vulgar supposition is founded in fact.

HENLEY.

107. ——*fear.*] So the folio: the later editions read, with the quarto, *force* for *fear*, less elegantly.

JOHNSON.

109. ——*this dreadful* pother——] Thus one of the quartos and the folio. The other quarto reads *thund'ring*.

The reading in the text, however, is an expression common to others. So, in the *Scornful Lady* of Beaumont and Fletcher:

“——*faln* out with their meat, and *kept a pudder.*”

STEEVENS.

115. *That under covert and convenient seeming,*] *Convenient* needs not be understood in any other than its usual and proper sense; *accommodate* to the present purpose; *suitable* to a design. *Convenient seeming* is *appearance*



*appearance* such as may promote his purpose to destroy. JOHNSON.

117. —*concealing* continents—] *Continent* stands for that which *contains* or *encloses*. JOHNSON.

Thus in *Antony and Cleopatra* :

“Heart, once be stronger than thy *continent* !”

The quartos read, *concealed centers*. STEEVENS.

—————*and cry*

*These dreadful summoners grace*.——] *Summoners* are here the *officers* that summon offenders before a proper tribunal. STEEVENS.

134. *That's sorry yet for thee.*] The old quartos read,

*That sorrows yet for thee.* STEEVENS.

135. *He that has a little tiny wit*—] I fancy that the second line of this stanza had once a termination that rhymed with the fourth; but I can only fancy it; for both the copies agree. It was once perhaps written,

With heigh ho, the wind and the rain *in his way*.  
The meaning seems likewise to require this insertion.  
“He that has wit, however small, and finds wind and rain in his way, must content himself by thinking, that somewhere or other *it raineth every day*, and others are therefore suffering like himself.” Yet I am afraid that all this is chimerical, for the burthen appears again in the song at the end of *Twelfth Night*, and seems to have been an arbitrary supplement, without any reference to the sense of the song.

JOHNSON.



142. *I'll speak a prophecy ere I go:*  
*When priests are more in words than matter;*  
*When brewers marr their malt with water;*  
*When nobles are their tailors' tutors;*  
*No hereticks burn'd, but wenches' suitors;*  
*When every case in law is right;*  
*No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;*  
*When slanders do not live in tongues,*  
*And cut-purses come not to throngs;*  
*When usurers tell their gold i' the field,*  
*And bawds and whores do churches build;*  
*Then shall the realm of Albion*  
*Come to great confusion.*  
*Then comes the time, who lives to see't,*  
*That going shall be us'd with feet.]*

The judicious reader will observe, through this heap of nonsense and confusion, that this is not *one* but *two* prophecies. The first, a satyrical description of the *present manners as future*: and the second, a satyrical description of *future manners*; which the corruption of the present would prevent from ever happening. Each of these prophecies has its proper inference or deduction: yet, by an unaccountable stupidity, the first editors took the whole to be all one prophecy, and so jumbled the two contrary inferences together. The whole then should be read as follows, only premising that the first line is corrupted by the loss of a word—or *ere I go*, is not English, and should be helped thus:

1. I'll speak a prophecy or *two* ere I go:  
 When priests are more in words than matter;  
 When brewers marr their malt with water;

When



When nobles are their tailors' tutors ;  
 No hereticks burnt, but wenches' suitors ;  
 Then comes the time, who lives to see't,  
 That going shall be us'd with feet.—*i. e.* *Now.*

2. When every case in law is right ;  
 No squire in debt, and no poor knight ;  
 When slanders do not live in tongues,  
 And cut-purses come not to throngs ;  
 When usurers tell their gold i' the field,  
 And bawds and whores do churches build ;  
 Then shall the realm of Albion  
 Come to great confusion.—*i. e.* *Never.*

WARBURTON.

The sagacity and acuteness of Dr. Warburton are very conspicuous in this note. He has disentangled the confusion of the passage, and I have inserted his emendation in the text. *Or e'er*, is proved by Mr. Upton to be good English ; but the controversy was not necessary, for *or* is not in the old copies. JOHNSON.

145. *When nobles are their tailors' tutors ;]* *i. e.* Invent fashions for them. WARBURTON.

146. *No hereticks burn'd, but wenches' suitors ;]* The disease to which *wenches' suitors* are particularly exposed, was called in Shakspeare's time the *brenning* or *burning*. JOHNSON.

157. *This prophecy——]* This prophecy is not in the quartos.

*Then shall the realm of Albion  
 Come to great confusion.]*

These



These lines are taken from Chaucer. Puttenham, in his *Art of Poetry*, 1589, quotes them as follows :

“ When faith fails in priestes saws,

“ And lords hests are holden for laws,

“ And robbery is tane for purchase,

“ And letchery for solace,

“ Then shall the realm of Albion

“ Be brought to great confusion.” STEEVENS.

194. *But where the greater malady is fix'd,*

*The lesser is scarce felt.]*

So, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, b. I. c. vi.

“ He lesser pangs can bear who hath endur'd the chief.” STEEVENS.

196. ————raging sea,] Such is the reading of that which appears to be the elder of the two quartos. The other, with the folio, reads—*roaring sea*.

STEEVENS.

203. ————In such a night

*To shut me out!—Pour on, I will endure:—]*

Omitted in the quartos.

STEEVENS.

213. *In, boy; go first.——]* These two lines were added in the author's revision, and are only in the folio. They are very judiciously intended to represent that humility, or tenderness, or neglect of forms, which affliction forces on the mind.

JOHNSON.

218. *loop'd and window'd raggedness]* Loops are small apertures in ancient buildings, particularly castles and towers, for the admission of light, where

H

windows



windows would have been incommodious. Shakspeare in Othello, and other places, hath alluded to them.

HENLEY.

The folio reads *lop'd*.

HENDERSON.

——window'd raggedness——

So in the *Amorous War*, 1648 :

“ ——spare me a doublet which

“ Hath linings in't, and no glass *windows*.”

This allusion is as old as the time of *Plautus*, in one of whose plays it is found.

Again, in the comedy already quoted :

“ ——this jerkin

“ Is wholly made of *doors*.”

STEEVENS.

224. ——*Take physick, pomp!*

*Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel;*

*That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,*

*And shew the heavens more just.]*

A kindred thought occurs in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* :

“ O let those cities that of plenty's cup

“ And her prosperities so largely taste,

“ With their superfluous riots—hear these  
tears ;

“ The misery of Tharsus may be theirs.”

MALONE.

223. *Fathom, &c.*] This speech of Edgar is omitted in the quartos. He gives the sign used by those who are sounding the depth at sea.

STEEVENS.

234. *Humph! go to thy bed——*] So the folio. The quarto,

Go to thy cold bed, and warm thee. JOHNSON.

So,



So, in the introduction to *The Taming of a Shrew*, Sly says, “go to thy cold bed, and warm thee.” A ridicule, I suppose, on some passage in a play as absurd as the *Spanish Tragedy*. STEEVENS.

237. *Hast thou given all to thy two daughters?*] Thus the quartos. The folio reads, *Didst thou give all to thy daughters?* STEEVENS.

239. —*led through fire and through flame*—] Alluding to the *ignis fatuus*, supposed to be lights kindled by mischievous beings to lead travellers into destruction. JOHNSON.

243. —*laid knives under his pillow*—] He recounts the temptations by which he was prompted to suicide; the opportunities of destroying himself, which often occurred to him in his melancholy moods. JOHNSON.

Shakspeare found this charge against the fiend, with many others of the same nature, in Harsenet’s *Declaration*, and has used the very words of it. The book was printed in 1603. See Dr. Warburton’s note, on line 71, act iv.

Infernal spirits are always represented as urging the wretched to self-destruction. So, in *Dr. Faustus*, 1604:

“Swords, poisons, halters, and envenom’d steel,  
“Are laid before me to dispatch myself.”

STEEVENS.

245. —*bless thy five wits*.] So the five senses were called by our old writers. Thus in the very ancient interlude of *The Fyve Elements*, one of the characters

Hij

is



is *Sensual Appetite*, who with great simplicity thus introduces himself to the audience :

“ I am callyd sensual apetyte,  
 “ All creatures in me delyte,  
 “ I comferte the *wyttys five* ;  
 “ The tastyng smellyng and herynge  
 “ I refreshe the syghte and felygne  
 “ To all creaturs alyve.”

Sig. B. iij.

PERCY.

So again, in *Every Man*, a Morality :

“ *Every man*, thou arte made, thou hast thy  
*wyttes fyve.*”

Again, in *Hycke Scorne* :

“ I have spent amys my *v wittes.*” STEEVENS.

Shakspeare, however, in his 141st Sonnet, seems to have considered the *five wits*, as distinct from the *senses* :

“ But my *five wits*, nor my *five senses* can  
 “ Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee.”

MALONE.

245. ——*taking!*—] To *take* is to blast, or strike with malignant influence :

——strike her young bones,

Ye *taking* airs, with lameness. JOHNSON.

261. ——*pelican daughters.*] The young pelican is fabled to suck the mother's blood. JOHNSON.

So, in Decker's *Honest Whore*, 1630, second part :  
 “ Shall a silly bird pick her own breast to nourish her young ones ? the *pelican* does it, and shall not I ?

Again, in *Love in a Maze*, 1632 :

“ The



“ The *pelican* loves not her young so well,  
 “ That digs upon her breast a hundred springs.”

STEEVENS.

267. *Commit not, &c.*] The word *commit* is used in this sense by Middleton, in *Women beware Women* :

“ His weight is deadly who *commits* with strumpets.”

STEEVENS.

272. ——— *wore gloves in my cap*—] *i. e.* His mistress's favours : which was the fashion of that time. So in the play called *Campaspe* : “ Thy men turned to women, thy soldiers to *lovers*, *gloves worn in velvet caps*, instead of plumes in graven helmets.”

WARBURTON.

It was anciently the custom to wear *gloves* in the hat on three distinct occasions, viz. as the favour of a mistress, the memorial of a friend, and as a mark to be challenged by an enemy. Prince Henry boasts that he *will pluck a glove from the commonest creature*, and fix it in his helmet ; and Tucca says to sir Quintilian, in Decker's *Satiromastix* :

“ ———Thou shalt wear her *glove* in thy worshipful hat, like to a leather brooch :” and Pandora in Lylly's *Woman in the Moon*, 1597 :

“ ———he that first presents me with his head,

“ Shall wear my *glove* in favour of the deed.”

Portia, in her assumed character, asks Bassanio for his *gloves*, which she says she will *wear for his sake* : and king Henry V. gives the pretended *glove* of Alençon to Fluellen, which afterwards occasions his quarrel with the English soldier.

STEEVENS.



278. ———*light of ear*———] *i. e.* Credulous.

WARBURTON.

Not merely *credulous*, but *credulous of evil*, ready to receive malicious reports. JOHNSON.

279. ———*Hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, &c.*] The Jesuits pretended to cast the seven deadly sins out of Mainy in the shape of those animals that represented them; and before each was cast out, Mainy by gestures acted that particular sin; curling his hair to shew *pride*, vomiting for *gluttony*, gaping and snoring for *sloth*, &c.—Harsenet's book, pp. 279, 280, &c. To this probably our author alludes. STEEVENS.

283. ———*thy hand out of plackets.*] See *Placket* in catch-word Alphabet.

285. *Thy pen from lenders' books.*] So, in *All Fools*, a comedy by Chapman, 1605:

“If I but *write my name in mercers' books*,

“I am as sure to have at six months end

“A rascal at my elbow with his mace,” &c.

STEEVENS.

286. *Ha no nonny, &c.*] *Hey no nonny* is the burden of a ballad in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (said to be written by Shakspeare in conjunction with Fletcher), and was probably common to many others. The folio introduces it into one of *Ophelia's* songs.

STEEVENS.

It is observable that the two songs, to which Mr. Steevens refers for the burden of *Hey no nonny*, are both sung by girls distracted from disappointed love.

The



The meaning of this burden may be inferred from what follows :—Drayton's *Shepherd's Garland*, 1593, 4to.

“ Who ever heard thy pipe and pleasing vaine,  
 “ And doth but heare this scurrill minstraley,  
 “ These *noninos* of filthie ribauldry,  
 “ That doth not muse.”

Again, in White's *Wit of a Woman* :

“ —these dauncers, sometimes do teach them tricke  
 above trenchmore, yea and sometimes such la voltas,  
 that they mount so high, that you may see their *hey*  
*nony, nony, nony, no.*”

HENLEY.

286. *Dolphin, my boy, &c.]*

*Dolphin, my boy, my boy,  
 Cease, let him trot by;*

It seemeth not that such a foe  
 From me or you would fly.

This is a stanza from a very old ballad written on some battle fought in France, during which the king, unwilling to put the suspected valour of his son the *Dauphin*, i. e. *Dolphin* (so called and spelt at those times) to the trial, is represented as desirous to restrain him from any attempt to establish an opinion of his courage on an adversary who wears the least appearance of strength ; and at last assists in propping up a dead body against a tree for him to try his manhood upon. Therefore, as different champions are supposed crossing the field, the king always discovers some objection to his attacking each of them, and repeats



repeats these two lines as every fresh personage is introduced.

*Dolphin, my boy, my boy, &c.*

The song I have never seen, but had this account from an old gentleman, who was only able to repeat part of it, and died before I could have supposed the discovery would have been of the least importance to me.—As for the words, *says suum, mun*, they are only to be found in the first folio, and were probably added by the players, who, together with the compositors, were likely enough to corrupt what they did not understand, or to add more of their own to what they already concluded to be nonsense.

STEEVENS.

*Cokes* cries out in *Bartholomew-Fair*:

“God’s my life!—He shall be *Dauphin, my boy!*”

FARMER.

296. *Come ; unbutton here.*] Thus the folio. One of the quartos reads:

*Come on, be true.*

STEEVENS.

300. ———*an old lecher’s heart.*] This image appears to have been imitated by Beaumont and Fletcher in the *Humourous Lieutenant*:

“—————*an old man’s loose desire*

“Is like the glow-worm’s light the apes so wonder’d at ;

“Which, when they gather’d sticks, and laid upon’t,

“And blew and blew, turn’d tail, and went out presently.”

STEEVENS.



303. ——— *Flibbertigibbet* ; ———] We are not much acquainted with this fiend. Latimer in his sermons mentions him ; and Heywood, among his sixte hundred of *Epigrams*, edit. 1576, has the following, *Of calling one Flebergibet* :

“ Thou *Flebergibet*, *Flebergibet*, thou wretch !

“ Wottest thou whereto last part of that word doth stretch ?

“ Leave that word, or I’le baste thee with a libet ;

“ Of all woords I hate woords that end with gibet.” STEEVENS.

“ *Frateretto*, *Fliberdigibet*, *Hoberdidance*, *Tocobatto*, were four devils of the round or morice . . . . . These four had forty assistants under them, as themselves doe confesse.” *Harsenet*, p. 49. PERCY.

305. ——— *web and the pin* ———] Diseases of the eye. JOHNSON.

So, in *Every Woman in her Humour*, 1600. One of the characters is giving a ludicrous description of a lady’s face, and when he comes to her eyes he says, “ a *pin and web* argent in hair duroy.” STEEVENS.

308. *Saint Withold footed thrice the wold,*  
*He met the night-mare, and her nine-fold,*  
*Bid her alight, and her troth plight,*  
*And aroynt thee, witch, aroynt thee !]*

We should read it thus :

Saint Withold footed thrice the wold,  
 He met the night-mare, and her *name told*,  
 Bid her alight, and her troth plight,  
 And aroynt thee, witch, aroynt thee *right*!



*i. e.* Saint Withold, traversing the *wold* or *downs*, met the night-mare ; who having told her name, he obliges her to *alight* from those persons whom she rides, and *plight her troth* to do no more mischief. This is taken from a story of him in his legend. Hence he was invoked as the patron saint against that distemper. And these verses were no other than a popular charm, or *night-spell* against the Epilepsy. The last line is the formal execration or apostrophe of the speaker of the charm to the witch, *aroynt thee right*, *i. e.* depart forthwith. Bedlams, gipsies, and such like vagabonds, used to sell these kinds of spells or charms to the people. They were of various kinds for various disorders. We have another of them in the *Monsieur Thomas* of Fletcher, which he expressly calls a *night-spell*, and is in these words :

“ Saint George, Saint George, our lady’s knight,  
 “ He walks by day, so he does by night ;  
 “ And when he had her found,  
 “ He her beat and her bound ;  
 “ Until *to him her troth she plight*,  
 “ She would not stir from him that night.”

WARBURTON.

This is likewise one of the “magical cures” for the *incubus*, quoted, with little variation, by Reginald Scott, in his *Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1584.

STEEVENS.

In the old quarto the corruption is such as may deserve to be noted. “Swithald footed thrice the olde anelthu night moore and her nine fold bid her, O  
 light



light and her troth plight and arint thee, with arint thee.”

JOHNSON.

Shakspeare might have met with St. Withold in the old spurious play of *King John*, where this saint is invoked by a Franciscan friar. The *wold* I suppose to be the true reading. So in the *Coventry Collection of Mysteries*, Mus. Brit. Vesp. D. viii. p. 93. Herod says to one of his officers :

“ Seyward bolde, walke thou on *wolde*,

“ And wysely behold all abowte,” &c.

STEEVENS.

The ancient reading is *the olds* : which is pompously corrected by Mr. Theobald, with the help of his friend Mr. Bishop, to the *wolds* : in fact, it is the same word. Spelman writes, *Burton upon olds* : the provincial pronunciation is still the *oles* : and that probably was the vulgar orthography. Let us read then,

“ *St Withold* footed thrice the *oles*,

“ He met the night-mare, and her nine *foles*,” &c.

FARMER.

Both the quarto and folio have *old*, and not *olds*.

MALONE.

*Aroynt*, see catch-word Alphabet.

318. ———*wall-newt*,] The quarto reads *wall wort*.

HENDERSON.

322. ———*whipt from tything to tything*——] A *tything* is a division of a place, a district ; the same in the country, as a ward in the city. In the Saxon times every hundred was divided into *tythings*. Edgar

alludes



alludes to the acts of *Queen Elizabeth* and *James I.* against rogues, vagabonds, &c. In the Statute, 39 Eliz. ch. 4. it is enacted, that every vagabond, &c. shall be publickly *whipped and sent* from parish to parish. STEEVENS.

326. ———*small deer*] This distich is part of a description in the old metrical romance of *Sir Bevis of Southampton*, of the hardships suffered by *Bevis* when confined for seven years in a dungeon:

“ Rattes and myce, and such smal dere,

“ Was his meate that seven yere.” PERCY.

329. —*Peace, Smolkin, peace—*] “ The names of other punie spirits cast out of Trayford were these: Hilco, *Smolkin*, Hillio, &c.” Harsenet, p. 49. PERCY.

330. *The prince of darkness is a gentleman* ;] This is spoken in resentment of what Gloster had just said —“ Has your grace no *better* company ?” STEEVENS.

331. *Modo he's call'd, and Mahu.*] So in Harsenet's *Declaration*, *Maho* was the chief devil that had possession of Sarah Williams ; but another of the possessed, named Richard Mainy, was molested by a still more considerable fiend called *Modu*. See the book already mentioned, p. 268, where the said Richard Mainy deposes: “ Furthermore it is pretended, that there remaineth still in mee the prince of all other devils, whose name should be *Modu* ; he is elsewhere called, “ the prince *Modu* :” so, p. 269, “ When the said priests had dispatched their business at Hackney (where they had been exorcising Sarah Williams) they then returned towards mee,

uppon



uppon pretence to cast the great prince *Modu* . . . out mee.” STEEVENS.

345. ———*learned Theban.*] Ben Jonson, in his *Masque of Pan's Anniversary*, has introduced a *Tinker*, whom he calls a *learned Theban*, perhaps in ridicule of this passage. STEEVENS.

350. *His wits begin to unsettle.*] On this occasion, I cannot prevail on myself to omit the following excellent remark of Mr. Horace Walpole, inserted in the postscript to his *Mysterious Mother*. He observes, that when “*Belvidera* talks of

“*Lutes, laurels, seas of milk, and ships of amber*—she is not mad, but light-headed. When madness has taken possession of a person, such character ceases to be fit for the stage, or at least should appear there but for a short time; it being the business of the theatre to exhibit passions, not distempers. The finest picture ever drawn, of a head discomposed by misfortune, is that of *King Lear*. His thoughts dwell on the ingratitude of his daughters, and every sentence that falls from his wildness excites reflection and pity. Had phrenzy entirely seized him, our compassion would abate: we should conclude that he no longer felt unhappiness. Shakspeare wrote as a philosopher, Otway as a poet.” STEEVENS.

375. *Child Rowland.*] The word *child* (however it came to have this sense) is often applied to *Knights*, &c. in old historical songs and romances; of this, innumerable instances occur in the *Reliques of ancient English Poetry*. See particularly in Vol. I. s. iv. v. 97.



where, in a description of a battle between two knights, we find these lines :

“ The Eldridge knight, he prick’d his steed ;  
 “ Syr Cawline bold abode :  
 “ Then either shook his trusty spear,  
 “ And the timber these two *children* bare  
 “ So soon in sunder slode.”

See in the same volumes the ballads concerning the *child of Elle*, *child Waters*, *child Maurice* [Vol. III. s. xx.] &c. The same idiom occurs in *Spenser’s Faerie Queen*, where the famous knight Sir Tristram is frequently called *Child Tristram*. See B. V. c. ii. st. 8. 13. B. VI. c. ii. st. 36. Ibid. c. viii. st. 15. PERCY.

Shakspeare here alludes to an antiquated ballad, or some story of *Roland*. Mr. Steevens has marked a similar reference in *The Woman’s Prize* of Beaumont and Fletcher :

“ ———a mere hobby-horse  
 “ She made the *Child Rowland*.”

376. *Fie, fok, and fum, &c.*] In *Have with you to Saffron-Walden, or Gabriel Harvey’s Hunt is Up*, 1598, part of the lines repeated by Edgar is quoted :—“ a pedant, who will find matter inough to dilate a whole daye of the first invention of

“ Fy, fa, fum,  
 “ I smell the blood of an Englishman.”

Both the quartos read :

————to the dark *town* come. STEEVENS.

384. ———but a provoking *merit*,] *Provoking* here means *stimulating* ; a merit he felt in himself, which  
 irritated



irritated him against a father that had none.

MONCK MASON.

397. ——— *comforting* ———] *Comforting* here means giving *comfort* or *assistance*. So Gloster says in the beginning of the next scene:

—I will piece out the *comfort* with what addition I can.

MONCK MASON.

402. Fool *Pr'ythee, nuncle, tell me.*——] And before, in the same act, sc. iii.—“Cry to it, nuncle.” Why does the Fool call the old king, *nuncle*? But we have the same appellation in *The Pilgrim*, by Fletcher:

“Farewel, *Nuncle*,”——Act iv. sc. 1.

And in the next scene, alluding to Shakspeare,

“What mops and mowes it makes.”

WHALLEY.

404. This speech is omitted in the quartos.

STEEVENS.

408. *Come hizzing in upon 'em.*——] Then follow in the old edition several speeches in the mad way, which probably were left out by the players, or by Shakspeare himself: I shall however insert them here, and leave them to the reader's mercy. POPE.

As Mr. Pope had begun to insert several speeches in the mad way, in this scene, from the old edition, I have ventured to replace several others, which stand upon the same footing, and had an equal right of being restored.

THEOBALD.

409. *Edgar.*] This and the next fourteen speeches (which Dr. Johnson had enclosed in crotchets) are only in the quartos.

STEEVENS.



421. ———*the health of a horse,*—] Shakspeare is here speaking of things uncertain. A horse is above all other animals subject to diseases. JOHNSON.

426. *Wantest, &c.*] I am not confident that I understand the meaning of this desultory speech. When Edgar says, *Look where he stands and glares!* he seems to be speaking in the character of a madman, who thinks he sees the fiend. *Wantest thou eyes at trial, madam?* is a question which appears to be addressed to the visionary Goneril, or some other abandon'd female, and may signify, *Do you want to attract admiration, even while you stand at the bar of justice?* Mr. Seward proposes to read, *wanton'st* instead of *wantest*.

STEEVENS.

*At trial, madam?*] It may be observed that Edgar, being supposed to be found by chance, and therefore to have no knowledge of the rest, connects not his ideas with those of Lear, but pursues his own train of delirious or fantastick thought. To these words, *At trial, madam?* I think therefore that the name of Lear should be put. The process of the dialogue will support this conjecture. JOHNSON.

428. *Come o'er the broom, Bessy, to me :*] As there is no relation between *broom* and a *boat*, we may better read :

*Come o'er the brook, Bessy, to me.* JOHNSON.

At the beginning of *A very merry and pythie commedie, called, The longer thou Livest, the more Foole thou art, &c.* Imprinted at London by Wylllyam How, &c. black letter, no date, “*Entreth Moros, counterfaiting a vaine*



vaine gesture and foolish countenance, synging the foote of many songs, as fooles were wont;" and among them is this passage, which Dr. Johnson has very justly suspected of corruption :

" Com over the *boorne* Bessé

" My little pretie Bessé

" Com over the *boorne* Bessé to me."

This song was entered on the books of the Stationers-Company in the year 1564.

A *boorne* signifies a *rivulet* or *brook*. Hence the names of many of our villages terminate in *burn*, as *Milburn*, *Sherburn*, &c. STEEVENS.

There is a peculiar propriety in this address that has not, I believe, been hitherto observed. *Bessy* and poor *Tom*, it seems, usually travelled together. The author of *The Court of Conscience, or Dick Whipper's Sessions*, 1607, describing *beggars, idle rogues, and counterfeit madmen*, thus speaks of these associates :

" Another sort there is among you ; they

" Do rage with furie as if they were so frantique

" They knew not what they did, but every day

" Make sport with stick and flowers like an antique ;

" Stowt roge and harlot counterfeited gomme,

" One calls herself poor *Besse*, the other *Tom*."

MALONE.

The author of THE REMARKS has printed from an old manuscript the song itself.

431. ———in the voice of a nightingale.] Another deponent in Harsenet's book (p. 225, says), that the

I i i j

mistress



mistress of the house kept a *nightingale* in a cage, which being one night killed, and conveyed away into the garden, it was pretended the devil had killed it in spite. Perhaps this passage suggested to Shakspeare the circumstance of Tom's being haunted *in the voice of a nightingale*. PERCY.

432. ———*Hopdance cries in Tom's belly*———] In Harsenet's book, p. 194, 195, Sarah Williams (one of the pretended demoniacks) deposes, "—that if at any time she did belch, as oftentimes she did by reason that she was troubled with a wind in her stomacke, the priests would say at such times, that then the spirit began to rise in her . . . . and that the wind was the devil." And, as she saith, "if they heard any *croaking in her belly* . . . . then they would make a wonderful matter of that." *Hoberdidance* is mentioned before in Dr. Percy's note. STEEVENS.

433. —*white herring*.] *White herrings* are *pickled herrings*. See the *Northumberland Household Book*, p. 8. STEEVENS.

443. *Sleepest, or wakest, &c.*] This seems to be a stanza of some pastoral song. A shepherd is desired to pipe, and the request is enforced by a promise, that though his sheep be in the corn, *i. e.* committing a trespass by his negligence, implied in the question, *Sleepest thou, or wakest?* Yet a single tune upon his pipe shall secure them from the pound. JOHNSON.

*Minikin* was anciently a term of endearment. So, in the interlude of the *Repentance of Marie Magdalaine*, 1567, the *Vice* says, "What *mynikin* carnal concupiscence!"



piscence!" Barret, in his *Alvearie, or Quadruple Dictionary*, 1580, interprets *feat*, by "proper, well-fashioned, *minikin*, handsome." In the *Interlude of the Four Elements*, &c. printed by Rastell, 1519, *Ignorance* sings a song composed of the scraps of several others. Among them is the following line, on which Shakspeare may have designed a parody:

"Sleepyst thou, wakyst thou, Geffery Coke."

STEEVENS.

453. *Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint stool.*] This is a proverbial expression. STEEVENS.

464. ————*see they bark at me.*] The hint for this circumstance might have been taken from the pretended madness of one of the brothers in the translation of the *Menæchmi* of Plautus, 1595:

"Here's an old mastiff bitch stands barking at me," &c. STEEVENS.

If Shakspeare had access to the *Odyssey*, I should rather have supposed that the affectionate recognition of Ulysses by his dog, might have suggested the circumstance here marked by Lear. HENLEY.

467. *Be thy mouth or black or white,*] To have the roof of the mouth black, is in some dogs a proof that their breed is genuine. STEEVENS.

469. ————*brache or hym, &c.*] Names of particular sorts of dogs. POPE.

Sir T. Hanmer for *hym* reads *lym*. JOHNSON.

In Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew-Fair*, Quarlous says, —"all the *lime*-hounds of the city should have drawn after you by the scent."——A *limmer* or *leamer*, a dog of



of the chace, was so called from the *leam* or leash in which he was held till he was let slip. I have this information from *Caius de Canibus Britannicis*.——So, in the book of *Ancient Tenures*, by T. B. 1679, the words, “*canes domini regis lesos*,” are translated “Leash hounds, such as draw after a hurt deer in a *leash*, or *liam*.”

Again, in the *Muses Elysium*, by Drayton :

“My dog-hook at my belt, to which my *lyam*’s  
ty’d.”

Again: “My *hound* then in my *lyam*, &c.”

Among the presents sent from James I. to the king and queen of Spain were “A cupple of *lyme-houndes* of singular qualities.”

Again, in Massinger’s *Bashful Lover* :

“——smell out

“Her footing like a *lime-hound*.”

The late Mr. Hawkins, in his notes to the *Return from Parnassus*, p. 237, says, that a *rache* is a dog that hunts by scent wild beasts, birds, and even fishes, and that the female of it is called a *brache* : and in *Magnificence*, an ancient interlude or morality, by Skelton, printed by Rastell, no date, is the following line :

“Here is a leyshe of *ratches* to renne an hare.”

STEEVENS.

What is here said of a *rache* might perhaps be taken by Mr. Hawkins from Holinshed’s *Description of Scotland*, p. 14, where the sleuthound means a blood-hound. The females of all dogs were once called *braches* ;



*braches*; and Ulitius upon Gratius observes, “*Racha Saxonibus canem significabat unde Scoti hodie Rache pro cane foemina habent, quod Anglis est Brache.*”

TOLLET.

470. —bobtail *tike*—] Tijk is the Runick word for a little, or worthless dog;

“Are Mr. Robinson’s dogs turn’d *tikes* with a wanion?” *Witches of Lancaster*, 1634.

STEEVENS.

470. ———*trundle-tail*.] This sort of dog is mentioned in *A Woman killed with Kindness*, 1617:

“——your dogs are *trundle-tails* and curs.”

Again, in *The Booke of Huntynge*, &c. bl. let. no date:

“——dunghill dogs, *trindle-tails*, &c.”

STEEVENS.

474. *Sessey, come*, &c.] Here is *sessey* again, which I take to be the French word *cessez* pronounced *cessey*, which was, I suppose, like some others, in common use among us. It is an interjection enforcing cessation of any action, like, *be quiet, have done*. It seems to have been gradually corrupted into *so, so*. JOHNSON.

This word is wanting in the quarto: in the folio it is printed *sese*. It is difficult in this place to say what is meant by it. It should be remembered, that just before, Edgar had been calling on *Bessy* to come to him; and he may now with equal propriety invite *Sessy* (perhaps a female name corrupted from *Cecilia*) to attend him to *wakes and fairs*. Nor is it impossible but that this may be a part of some old song, and originally stood thus:

Sissy,



Sissy, come march to wakes,  
And fairs, and market towns.————

So, in *Humor's Ordinarie*, an ancient collection of satires, no date :

“ To make Sisse in love withal.”

Again :

“ My heart's deare blood, sweet Sisse, is my carouse.”

There is another line in the character of Edgar which I am very confident I have seen in an old ballad, viz.

Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind.

STEEVENS.

Dr. Johnson is surely right, in supposing that *sessy* is a corruption of *cessez*, be quiet, stop, hold, let alone. It is so used by Christofero Sly, the drunken Tinker, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, and by Edgar himself in a preceding scene—“ Dolphin, by boy, *Sessy* ; let him trot by.”—But it does not seem equally clear that it has been corrupted into *so, so*. REMARKS.

475. ———*thy horn is dry*.] Men that begged under pretence of lunacy used formerly to carry a horn, and blow it through the streets. JOHNSON.

A *horn* is at this day employed in many places in the country as a cup for drinking, but anciently the use of it was much more general. *Thy horn is dry*, appears to be a proverbial expression, introduced when a man has nothing further to offer, when he has said all he had to say. *Such a one's pipe's out*, is a phrase current in Ireland on the same occasion.

I suppose Edgar to speak these words *aside*. Being quite



quite weary of his Tom o' Bedlam's part, and finding himself unable to support it any longer, he says privately, "—I can no more: all my materials for sustaining the character of Poor Tom are now exhausted; *my horn is dry*: i. e. has nothing more in it; and accordingly we have no more of his dissembled madness till he meets his father in the next act, when he resumes it for a speech or two, but not without expressing the same dislike of it that he expresses here, "—I cannot daub it further." STEEVENS.

480. ———*You will say they are Persian*;——] Alluding perhaps to Clytus refusing the Persian robes offered him by Alexander. STEEVENS.

485. *And I'll go to bed at noon.*] Omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

495. *Take up, take up.*] One of the quartos reads —*Take up the king, &c.* the other—*Take up to keep, &c.* STEEVENS.

498. ———*Oppressed nature sleeps.*——] These two concluding speeches by Kent and Edgar, and which by no means ought to have been cut off, I have restored from the old quarto. THEOBALD.

499. ———*thy broken senses,*] The quarto, from whence this speech is taken, reads—*thy broken sinews.* *Senses* is the conjectural emendation of Theobald.

STEEVENS.

Theobald might have supported his emendation by a passage in *Macbeth*:

"———*the innocent sleep,*

"*Balm of hurt minds.*——"

MALONE.



507. — *free things*—] States clear from distress.

JOHNSON.

Thus Lear, before :

“ When the mind’s *free*, the body’s delicate.”

\* \* \*

508. *But then the mind much sufferance doth o’erskip,  
When grief hath mates, and bearing fellow-  
ship.*]

So, in our author’s *Rape of Lucrece* :

“ And fellowship in woe doth woe assuage.”

Again, in *Romeo and Juliet* :

“ Or, if sour *woe* delights in fellowship.—”

*Solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris.*—*Incer.*

*Auct.*

MALONE.

513. *Mark the high noises !—*]

Attend to the great events that are approaching, and make thyself known when that *false opinion* now prevailing against thee shall, in consequence of *just proof* of thy integrity, revoke its erroneous sentence, and recall thee to honour and reconciliation.

JOHNSON.

513. — *and thyself bewray*,] *Bewray*, which at present has only a dirty meaning, anciently signified to *betray*, to *discover*.

STEEVENS.

Thus in the Scripture, “ thy speech *bewrayeth* thee.”

\* \* \*

See *Bewray*, catch-word Alphabet.

528. — *and intelligent betwixt us.*]

So, in a former scene :

—spies and speculations

*Intelligent* of our state.

STEEVENS.

530. — *my lord of Gloster.*]

Meaning Edmund, newly



newly invested with his father's titles. The steward, speaking immediately after, mentions the old earl by the same title. JOHNSON.

534. *Hot questrists after him——*] A questrist is one who goes in search or quest of another.

STEEVENS.

542. *Though well we may not pass upon his life,*

*—————yet our pow'r*

*Shall do a courtesy to our wrath.——*] To do a courtesy is to gratify, to comply with. To pass, is to pass a judicial sentence. JOHNSON.

The original of the expression, *to pass on any one*, may be traced from *Magna Charta*:

“—*nec super eum ibimus, nisi per legale iudicium parium suorum.*”

It is common to most of our early writers. So, in *Acolastus*, a comedy, 1529: “I do not nowe consider the myschievous pageants he hath played; I do not now *passe upon* them.” Again, in *If this be not a good Play, the Devil is in It*, 1612: “A jury of brokers, impanel'd, and deeply sworn to *passe on* all villains in hell.” STEEVENS.

547. —*corky arms.*] Dry, wither'd, husky arms.

JOHNSON.

As Shakspeare appears from other passages of this play to have had in his eye *Bishop Harsenet's Declaration of egregious Popish Impostures*, &c. 1603, 4to. it is probable, that this very expressive, but peculiar epithet, *corky*, was suggested to him by a passage in that very curious pamphlet, “It would pose all the



cunning exorcists, that are this day to be found, to teach an old *corkie* woman to writhe, tumble, curvet, and fetch her morice gamboles, as Martha Bressier (one of the possessed mentioned in the pamphlet) did."

PERCY.

554. *By the kind gods,——*] People always invoke their deities as they would have them shew themselves at particular times in their favour; Gloster accordingly calls those *kind gods* whom he would wish to find so on this occasion. He does so yet a second time in this scene. Our own liturgy will sufficiently evince the truth of my supposition.

STEEVENS.

559. *Will quicken,——*] *i. e.* quicken into life.

MONCK MASON.

560. *——my hospitable favours*] *Favours* means the same as *features*, *i. e.* the different parts of which a face is composed. So, in *David and Bethsabe*, 1599:

"To daunt the *favours* of his lovely face."

STEEVENS.

563. *Be simple-answer'd, ——*] The old quarto reads, *Be simple answerer*.—Either is good sense: *simple* means *plain*.

STEEVENS.

578. *I am ty'd to the stake,——*] So, in *Macbeth*:

"They have *chain'd me to a stake*; I cannot fly,

"But, bear-like, I must stand the course."

STEEVENS.

*——the course.*] The running of the dogs upon me.

JOHNSON.

582. *——stick boarish fangs.*] The quartos read—

*rash*



*rash* boarish fangs. This verb occurs in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, B. IV. c. ii.

“And shields did share, and mai'es did *rash*, and helmes did hew.”

Again, B. V. c. iii.

“*Rashing* off helmes, and ryving plates asunder.”

To *rash* is the old hunting term for the stroke made by a wild boar with his fangs. STEEVENS.

586. ——*to rain*.] Thus the folio. The quartos read—*to rage*. STEEVENS.

587. ——*that stern time*,] Thus the folio. Both the quartos read—that *dearn* time.—*Dearn* is a north-country word, signifying *lonely*, solitary, melancholy, far from neighbours. So, in the *Valiant Scot*:

“Of all thy joys the *dearne* and dismal end.”

Again, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, B. II. c. i.

“They heard a rueful voice that *dearnly* cride.”

STEEVENS.

589. ——*subscrib'd*:——] Yielded, submitted to the necessity of the occasion. JOHNSON.

592. *Upon these eyes, &c.*] In *Selimus*, Emperor of the Turks, one of the sons of Bajazet pulls out the eyes of an aga on the stage, and says,

“Yes, thou shalt live, but never see that day,

“Wanting the tapers that should give thee light.”

[Pulls out his eyes.

Immediately after, his hands are cut off. I have introduced this passage, to shew that Shakspeare's drama was not more sanguinary than that of his contemporaries. STEEVENS.



In Marston's *Antonio and Mellida*, p. ii. 1602. Piero's tongue is torn out on the stage. MALONE.

604. *My villain!*] Villain is here perhaps used in its original sense of one in servitude. STEEVENS.

627. *I'll never care what wickedness I do,*] This short dialogue I have inserted from the old quarto, because I think it full of nature. Servants could hardly see such a barbarity committed on their master, without pity; and the vengeance that they presume must overtake the actors of it, is a sentiment and doctrine well worthy of the stage. THEOBALD.

It is not necessary to suppose them the servants of Gloster; for Cornwall was opposed to extremity by his own servant. JOHNSON.

### ACT IV.

Line 1. *YET* better thus, and known to be contemn'd,] The sentiment is this:—It is better to be thus contemned and know it, than to be flattered by those who secretly contemn us. HENLEY.

The quarto edition has no stop after *flatter'd*. The first folio, which has a comma there, has a colon at the end of the line.

The expression in this speech—*owes nothing to thy blasts*—(in a more learned writer) might seem to be copied from Virgil, *Æn.* xi. 51.

“ Nos



“ *Nos juvenem exanimum, et nil jam cœlestibus  
ullis*

“ *Debentem, vano mæsti comitamur honore.*”

TYRWHITT.

4. ——— *lives not in fear.*] So in Milton's *Par. Reg.*  
B. III.

“ For where no hope is left, is left no *fear.*”

STEEVENS.

6. — *Welcome then,*] The next two lines and a half  
are omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

10. ————— *O world!*

*But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,  
Life would not yield to age.*] The sense of this  
obscure passage is, O world! so much are human  
minds captivated with thy pleasures, that were it not  
for those successive miseries, each worse than the  
other, which overload the scenes of life, we should  
never be willing to submit to death, though the infir-  
mities of old age would teach us to choose it as a pro-  
per asylum. Besides, by uninterrupted prosperity,  
which leaves the mind at ease, the body would gene-  
rally preserve such a state of vigour as to bear up  
long against the decays of time. These are the two  
reasons, I suppose, why he said,

*Life would not yield to age.*

And how much the pleasures of the body pervert the  
mind's judgment, and the perturbations of the mind  
disorder the body's frame, is known to all.

WARBURTON.

*Yield to,* signifies no more than *give way to, sink*



under, in opposition to the *struggling with, bearing up against* the infirmities of age. HANMER.

12. *Our mean secures us;—*] *i. e.* Moderate, mediocre condition. WARBURTON.

The two original editions have:

*Our meanes secures us.——* JOHNSON.

*Mean* is here a substantive, and signifies *a middle state*, as Dr. Warburton rightly interprets it. So, again in *The Merchant of Venice*, “it is no mean happiness therefore to be seated in the *mean*.” See more instances in Dr. Johnson’s *Dictionary*. STEEVENS.

21. *——to see thee in my touch.*] So, in another scene, *I see it feelingly*, STEEVENS.

24. *——who is’t can say, I am at the worst?*

*——the worst is not,*

*So long as we can say, This is the worst.*]

*i. e.* While we live; for while we yet continue to have a sense of feeling, something worse than the present may still happen. What occasioned this reflection was his rashly saying in the beginning of this scene,

*——To be worst,*

The lowest, most dejected thing of fortune, &c.

The wretch, that thou hast blown unto the worst,

&c.

WARBURTON.

40. *As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods;*

*They kill us for their sport.*]

“*Dii nos quasi pilas homines habent.*”—*Plaut. Captiv. Prol. 1. 22.* STEEVENS.



44. ———*I cannot daub it*———] *i. e.* Disguise.

WARBURTON.

So, in *King Richard III*:

“So smooth he *daub'd* his vice with shew of virtue.”

The quartos read, “I cannot *dance* it further.”

STEEVENS.

59. *Five fiends, &c.*] The rest of this speech is omitted in the folio. In *Harsenet's Book*, already quoted, p. 278, we have an extract from the account published by the exorcists themselves, viz. “By commaundement of the exorcist . . . the devil in Ma. Mainy confessed his name to be *Modu*, and that he had besides himself *seaven other spirits*, and all of them captains, and of great fame.” “Then Edmundes (the exorcist) began againe with great earnestness, and all the company cried out, &c. . . . so as both that wicked prince *Modu and his company* might be cast out.” This passage will account for *five fiends having been in poor Tom at once*.

PERCY.

67. ———*mopping and mowing* ;] So in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Pilgrim*, act iv, sc. ii

“The devil in a fool's coat, is he turn'd innocent ?

“What *mops and mowes* it makes.”——

WHALLEY.

The proper meaning of these expressions may be drawn from the passages that follow :—Thus, in *Harsenet's Declaration of Popish Impostures*, “His reasons that moove him to think so well of us are, be-

cause



cause we do not tumble, wallow, foame, howle, scricke, and make *mouthes and mops*, as the popish possessed used to do."—And again:—"to frame themselves iumpe and fit unto the priest's humors, to *mop, mow, iest, raile, rave, roare,*" &c. HENLEY.

70. —*possesses chamber-maids and waiting-women.*—] Shakspeare has made Edgar, in his feigned distraction, frequently allude to a vile imposture of some English jesuits, at that time much the subject of conversation; the history of it having been just then composed with great art and vigour of style and composition by Dr. S. Harsenet, afterwards archbishop of York, by order of the privy-council, in a work entitled, *A Declaration of egregious Popish Impostures to withdraw her Majesty's Subjects from their Allegiance, &c. practised by Edmunds, alias Weston, a Jesuit, and divers Romish Priests his wicked Associates*: printed 1603. The imposture was in substance this. While the Spaniards were preparing their armado against England, the jesuits were here busy at work to promote it, by making converts: one method they employed was to dispossess pretended demoniacks, by which artifice they made several hundred converts amongst the common people. The principal scene of this farce was laid in the family of one Mr. Edmund Peckham, a Roman-Catholick, where Marwood, a servant of Anthony Babington's (who was afterwards executed for treason), Trayford, an attendant upon Mr. Peckham, and Sarah and Friswood Williams, and Anne Smith, *three chamber-maids* in that family, came into the priest's hands for cure.



cure. But the discipline of the patients was so long and severe, and the priests so elate and careless with their success, that the plot was discovered on the confession of the parties concerned, and the contrivers of it deservedly punished. The five devils here mentioned, are the names of five of those who were made to act in this farce upon the *chamber-maids and waiting-women*; and they were generally so ridiculously nicknamed, that Harsenet has one chapter *on the strange names of their devils*; lest, says he, *meeting them otherwise by chance, you mistake them for the names of tapsters or jugglers.* WARBURTON.

The passage in crotchets is omitted in the folio, because, I suppose, as the story was forgotten, the jest was lost. JOHNSON.

76. *Let the superfluous,*] Lear has before uttered the same sentiment, which indeed cannot be too strongly impressed, though it may be too often repeated. JOHNSON.

77. *That slaves your ordinance,—*] *To slave an ordinance*, is to treat it as a *slave*, to make it subject to us, instead of acting in obedience to it.

So, in Heywood's *Brazen Age*, 1613:

“———none

“Could *slave* him like the Lydian Omphale.”

Again, in *A New Way to pay Old Debts*, by Massinger:

“———that *slaves* me to his will.” STEEVENS.

90. ——*our mild husband*] It must be remembered that Albany, the husband of Goneril, disliked, in the  
end



end of the first act, the scheme of oppression and ingratitude. JOHNSON.

104. ———our wishes, on the way,  
May prove effects.———]

The wishes we have formed and communicated to each other, on our journey, may be carried into effect  
MONCK MASON.

107. ———I must change arms, &c.] Thus the quartos. The folio reads—*change names*. STEEVENS.

112. *Decline your head : this kiss, if it durst speak,  
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air.*]

She bids him decline his head, that she might give him a kiss (the steward being present), and that it might appear only to him as a whisper. STEEVENS.

117. *O, the difference of man and man !*] Omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

119. *My fool usurps my body.*] One of the quartos reads :

*My foot usurps my head ; the other,  
My foot usurps my body.* STEEVENS.

121. *I have been worth the whistle.*] This expression is a reproach to Albany for having neglected her ; *though you disregard me thus, I have been worth the whistle, I have found one that thinks me worth calling.*

JOHNSON.

This expression is a proverbial one. Heywood, in one of his dialogues, consisting entirely of proverbs, says :

“ It is a poor dog that is not worth the *whistling*.”

Goneril's meaning seems to be—*There was a time  
when*



when you would have thought me worth the calling to you ; reproaching him for not having summoned her to consult with on the present critical occasion.

STEEVENS.

124. ————*I fear your disposition :*] These and the speech ensuing are in the edition of 1608, and are but necessary to explain the reasons of the detestation which Albany here expresses to his wife. POPE.

126. *Cannot be border'd certain*————] Certain, for within the bounds that nature prescribes.

WARBURTON.

127. *She that herself will shiver and disbranch,*] Thus all the editions, but the old quarto, that reads *sliver*, which signifies to tear off or disbranch. So, in *Macbeth* :

————slips of yew

*Sliver'd* in the moon's eclipse. WARBURTON.

135. *Head-lugg'd bear*] Is it not probable that Shakspeare wrote, the *teat-lugg'd bear*?—So, before, act iii. line 10 :

“ This night wherein the *cub-drawn bear* would couch.” HENLEY.

129. *And come to deadly use.*] Alluding to the use that witches and inchanters are said to make of *wither'd branches* in their charms. A fine insinuation in the speaker, that she was ready for the most unnatural mischief, and a preparative of the poet to her plotting with the bastard against her husband's life.

WARBURTON.

135. ————*would lick.*] This line, which had been omitted



omitted by all my predecessors, I have restored from the quartos.

STEEVENS.

142. —*like monsters of the deep.*] Fishes are the only animals that are known to prey upon their own species.

JOHNSON.

The good doctor should have excepted mankind.— Besides the proofs with which the late South-Sea voyages abound, of the existence of *Cannibals*, the 4th book of Strabo brings the fact nearer home. In it he thus speaks of Ireland:—"Concerning this island I have nothing authentick to relate, except that its inhabitants are more savage than the Britons, being both *anthropophagi* and voracious; and esteeming it an honour to eat up the dead bodies of their fathers."

HENLEY.

146. —*that not, &c.*] The rest of this speech is omitted in the folio.

STEEVENS.

154. *Proper deformity*—] *i. e.* Diabolick qualities appear not so horrid in the devil to whom they belong, as in woman who unnaturally assumes them.

WARBURTON.

157. *Thou changed, and self-cover'd thing,*—] Of these lines there is but one copy, and the editors are forced upon conjecture. They have published this line thus:

Thou chang'd, and *self-converted* thing;  
but I cannot but think that by *self-cover'd* the author meant, thou that hast *disguised* nature by wickedness;  
thou that hast *hid* the woman under the fiend.

JOHNSON.

This



This and the next speech are omitted in the folio.

STEEVENS.

I have no doubt but that *self-cover'd* was Shakspeare's expression, and perhaps alludes to 2 Cor. xi. 14. "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."—for, just before, Albany had said to her:

"See thyself, devil!

"Proper deformity seems not in the fiend

"So horrid as in woman."—

And, almost immediately after, he adds:

"Howe'er thou art a fiend,

"A woman's shape doth shield thee."

By the phrase, "*Thou changed and self-cover'd thing*," we are to understand Albany, as meaning, that Goneril, having thrown off the convenient seeming of female gentleness, now no longer played the hypocrite, but exhibited in her face the self-same passions she had covered in her heart.

HENLEY.

182. *One way, I like this well*;] Goneril's plan was to poison her sister—to marry Edmund—to murder Albany—and to get possession of the whole kingdom; as the death of Cornwall facilitated the last part of her scheme, she was pleased at it; but disliked it, as it put it in the power of her sister to marry Edmund.

MONCK MASON.

199. Scene III.] This scene, left out in all the common books, is restored from the old edition; it being manifestly of Shakspeare's writing, and necessary to continue the story of Cordelia, whose behaviour is here most beautifully painted.

POPE.

L

It



It is extant only in the quarto, being omitted in the first folio.

JOHNSON.

199. ———a Gentleman.] The gentleman whom he sent in the foregoing act with letters to Cordelia.

JOHNSON.

217. —————her smiles and tears

Were like a better day.————]

It is plain, we should read————a wetter May.————

i. e. A spring season wetter than ordinary.

WARBURTON.

The thought is taken from Sidney's *Arcadia*, p. 244. "Her tears came dropping down like rain in sunshine." Cordelia's behaviour on this occasion is apparently copied from *Pholoclea's*. The same book, in another place, says—"that her tears followed one another like a precious rope of pearl." The quartos read—a better way—which may be an accidental inversion of the M.

A better day, however, is the best day, and the best day is a day most favourable to the productions of the earth. Such are the days in which there is a due mixture of rain and sunshine.

It must be observed that the *comparative* is used by Milton and others, instead of the *positive* and *superlative*, as well as by Shakspeare himself, in the play before us:

"The safer sense will ne'er accommodate

"Its master thus."

Again, in *Macbeth*:

"——it hath cow'd my better part of man."

Again,



Again,

“——Go not my horse the *better*.”

Mr. Pope makes no scruple to say of Achilles, that

“The Pelian javelin in his *better* hand

“Shot trembling rays,” &c.

*i. e.* his *best* hand, his *right*.

STEEVENS.

Doth not Dr. Warburton's alteration infer, that Cordelia's sorrow was superior to her patience? But it seemed that she was a queen over her passion; and the smiles on her lip appeared not to know that tears were in her eyes. Her smiles and tears were like a better day, or like a better May, may signify that they were like such a season where sunshine prevailed over rain. So in *All's Well that Ends Well*, act v. scene 3, we see in the king “*sunshine and hail at once; but to the brightest beams distracted clouds give way: the time is fair again, and he is like a day of season,*”

*i. e.* better day.

TOLLET.

218. ——*smiles*,] The quartos read *smilets*. This may be a diminutive of Shakspeare's coinage.

STEEVENS:

221. *As pearls from diamonds dropt.*—] A similar thought to this of Shakspeare, occurs in Middleton's *Game at Chess*, 1625:

“——the holy dew lies like a pearl

“Dropt from the *opening eye-lids of the morn*

“Upon the bashful rose.”

Milton has transplanted this image into his *Lycidas*:

“Under the *opening eye-lids of the morn.*”

STEEVENS.



That humidity of the eye which emits a sparkling radiance, and was the attribute of Venus herself [—ΥΓΡΟΝ, ὡς, Κυθρηνης] the poet here compares to the scintillations of the *diamond*, and the drop which it forms in departing from the eye-lid (for in a falling state it becomes opaque) to a *pearl*.—Thus, Fairfax, from Tasso :

“ —drops bright, white, round, like *pearls* of Inde,  
 “ Her humid eyes shot forth,  
 “ That like sun-beams in silver fountains shin’d.”

HENLEY.

224. *Made she no verbal question?*] Means only, Did she enter into no conversation with you? In this sense our poet frequently uses the word *question*, and not simply as the act of *interrogation*. Did she give you to understand her meaning *by words*, as well as by the foregoing external testimonies of sorrow?

So, in *All's Well that Ends Well*:

“ —————she told me

“ In a sweet *verbal* brief,” &c. STEEVENS.

229. *Let pity not be believ'd!*] *i. e.* Let not such a thing as pity be supposed to exist! Thus the old copies. STEEVENS.

231. *And clamour-moisten'd—*] It is not impossible but Shakspeare might have formed this fine picture of Cordelia's agony from holy writ, in the conduct of Joseph; who, being no longer able to restrain the vehemence of his affection, commanded all his retinue from his presence; and then *wept aloud*, and discovered himself to his brethren.

THEOBALD.

*Clamour*



*Clamour moisten'd her ;] that is, her out-cries were accompanied with tears.* JOHNSON.

235. ———— *one self-mate and mate] The same husband and the same wife.* JOHNSON.

248. ———— *these things sting him  
So venomously, that burning shame]*

The metaphor is here preserved with great knowledge of nature ; the *venom* of poisonous animals being a high caustick salt, that has all the effect of *fire* upon the part. WARBURTON.

263. *With hardocks, hemlock, &c.] Hardocks should be harlocks. Thus Drayton in one of his Eclogues :*

“ The honey-suckle, the *harlocke*,

“ The lily, and the lady-smocke,” &c.

FARMER.

264. *Darnel,]* According to Gerard, is *the most hurtful of weeds* among corn. It is mentioned in *The Witches of Lancashire*, 1634 :

“ That cockle, *darnel*, poppy wild,

“ May choke his grain,” &c.

STEEVENS.

280. — *the means to lead it.] The reason which should guide it.* JOHNSON.

287. ———— *important* ————] In other places of this author for *importunate*. JOHNSON.

The folio reads, *importuned*.

STEEVENS.

288. *No blown ambition* ————] No inflated, no swelling pride. Beza on the Spanish armada :

“ Quam bene te ambitio mersit vanissima, ventus,

“ Et tumidos tumidæ vos superastis aquæ.”

JOHNSON.



In the *Mad Lover* of Beaumont and Fletcher, the same epithet is given to ambition.

Again, in the *Little French Lawyer* :

“ I come with no *blown* spirit to abuse you.”

STEEVENS.

296. ———your lady——] The folio reads, *your lord*; and rightly. Goneril not only converses with Lord Edmund, in the Steward's presence, but prevents him from speaking to, or even seeing her husband.

REMARKS.

305. *His nighted life*;] *i. e.* His life made dark as night, by the extinction of his eyes.

STEEVENS.

319. *She gave strange œiliads*,——] *Ocillade*, Fr. a cast, or significant glance of the eye.

Greene, in his *Disputation between a He and She Coney-Catcher*, 1592, speaks of “ *amorous glances, smirking œiliades*,” &c.

STEEVENS.

323. ———I do advise you, take this note:] *Note* means in this place not a letter, but a remark. Therefore observe what I am saying.

JOHNSON.

*Therefore, I do advise you, take this note :*

*My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talk'd;*

*And more convenient is he for my hand*

*Than for your lady's. You may gather more.*

*If you do find him, pray you give him this;*

*And when your mistress hears thus much from you,*

*I pray, desire her call her wisdom to her.]*

This passage, by a word being left out, and a word misplaced, and a full stop put where there should be but a comma, has led all our editors into a very great mistake;



mistake ; as will, I hope, appear, when we proceed a little further in the same play. The emendation is as follows :

Therefore I do advise you, \* *take note of this* ;  
My lord is dead, &c.

If you so find him, pray you give him *this* :

*i. e.* This answer by word of mouth. The editors, not so regardful of consistency as they ought to have been, ran away with the thought that Regan delivered a letter to the steward ; whereas she only desired him to give or deliver so much by word of mouth. And by this means another blunder, as egregious as the former, and arising out of it, presents itself to view in the same act, scene 6.

And give the *letters*, which thou find'st about me,  
To *Edmund, earl of Gloster*, &c.

*Edg.* Let's see his pockets : these letters, that he  
speaks of,

May be my friends.————

[*Reads the letter.*]

Observe, that here is but one letter produced and read, which is Goneril's. Had there been one of Regan's too, the audience no doubt should have heard it as well as Goneril's. But it is plain, from what is amended and explained above, that the Steward had

\* The like expression, *Twelfth Night*, act ii. sc. 4.—  
“ *Sir Toby*. Challenge me the duke's youth, to fight with him ; hurt him in eleven places ; my niece shall *take note* of it.”



no letter from Regan, but only a message to be delivered by word of mouth to *Edmund, earl of Gloster*. So that it is not to be doubted, but the last passage should be read thus :

And give the *letter*, which thou find'st about me,  
To *Edmund, earl of Gloster*.————

*Edg.* Let's see these pockets: the *letter*, that he speaks of,

May be my friend.————

Thus the whole is connected, clear, and consistent.

GREY.

326. ————*You may gather more.*] You may infer more than I have directly told you. JOHNSON.

334. *What party—*] Quarto, *What lady*.

JOHNSON.

336. Scene VI.] This scene, and the stratagem by which Gloster is cured of his desperation, are wholly borrowed from Sidney's *Arcadia*. JOHNSON.

345. —*thy voice is alter'd, &c.*] Edgar alters his voice in order to pass afterwards for a malignant spirit.

JOHNSON.

354. —*dreadful trade!*] “*Samphire* grows in great plenty on most of the sea-cliffs in this country: it is terrible to see how people gather it, hanging by a rope several fathom from the top of the impending rocks, as it were in the air.” Smith's *History of Waterford*, p. 315. edit. 1774. TOLLET.

358. ————*her cock;—*] Her cock-boat.

JOHNSON.

So,



So, in the ancient bl. let. comedy, called *Commons Conditions* :

“ Lanche out the *cocke* boies, and set the maister ashoare,

“ The *cocke* is lanced, eche man to his care,

“ Boie come up and grounde the *cocke* on the sande.”

Hence the term *cockswain*, a petty officer in a ship.

STEEVENS.

363. Topple *down headlong*.] To *topple* is to *tumble*.

STEEVENS.

This word is still in daily use in the eastern counties.

\* \* \*

367. —for all beneath the moon,

Would I not leap upright.]

So, in *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* :

“ Some let their lechour dight them all the night,

“ While that the cors lay on the flore *upright*.”

FARMER.

*Upright* has the same sense as the Latin *supinus* (with the face upward).

In *A wonderful, strange, and miraculous Astrological Prognostication for this Year, &c.* 1591: “ Maidens this winter shall have strange stitches and gripings of the collicke, which diseases proceed from lying too much *upright*.”

STEEVENS.

375. Why do I trifle thus with his despair?—

'Tis done to cure it.]

Perhaps the reading of the folio is better—

*Why*



*Why I do trifle thus with his despair,  
Is done to cure it.*

STEEVENS.

385. *Gone, sir? farewell.*] Thus the quartos and folio.

STEEVENS.

387. ————when life itself  
Yields to the theft.———]

When life is willing to be destroyed.

JOHNSON.

391. *Thus might he pass, indeed:—*] Thus might he *die* in reality. We still use the word *passing* bell.

JOHNSON.

394. *Hadst thou been aught but gossomer, feathers, air,*] *Gossomore*, the white and cobweb-like exhalations that fly about in hot sunny weather. Skinner says, in a book called *The French Gardener*, it signifies the down of the sow-thistle, which is driven to and fro by the wind:

“As sure some wonder on the cause of thunder,

“On ebb and flood, on gossomer and mist,

“And on all things, till that the cause is wist.”

DR. GREY.

398. *Ten masts at each make not the altitude,*] So Mr. Pope found it in the old editions; and seeing it corrupt, judiciously corrected it to *attacht*. But Mr. Theobald restores again the old nonsense, *at each*.

WARBURTON.

Mr. Pope's conjecture may stand, if the word which he uses were known in our author's time; but I think it is of later introduction. We may say:

Ten masts *on end*.——

JOHNSON.

Perhaps



Perhaps we should read—at *reach*, i. e. extent.

STEEVENS.

402. ———*chalky bourn* :] *Bourn* seems here to signify a *hill*. Its common signification is a *brook*. Milton in *Comus* uses *bosky bourn*, in the same sense perhaps with Shakspeare. But in both authors it may mean only a *boundary*.

JOHNSON.

419. —*enridged sea*.] Thus the quarto. The folio, *enraged*.

STEEVENS.

*Enridged* was certainly our author's word; for he has the same expression in his *Venus and Adonis* :

“ Till the wild *waves* will have him seen no more,

“ Whose *ridges* with the meeting clouds contend.”

MALONE.

420. ———*the clearest gods*——] The purest; the most free from evil.

JOHNSON.

427. *Bear free and patient thoughts*.] To be melancholy is to have the mind *chained down* to one painful idea; there is therefore great propriety in exhorting Gloster to *free thoughts*, to an emancipation of his soul from grief and despair.

JOHNSON.

429. *The safer sense will ne'er accommodate  
His master thus.———]*

So, in *Measure for Measure* :

“ Nor do I think the man of *safe* discretion

“ That does affect it.”

STEEVENS.

435. *That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper*.]

So, in the 48th *Idea* of Drayton :

“ Or if thou'lt not thy archery forbear,

“ To some base rustic do thyself prefer ;

“ And



“ And when corn’s sown, or grown into the ear,  
 “ Practise thy quiver, and turn *crow-keeper*.”

Mr. Tollet informs me, that Markham, in his *Farewell to Husbandry*, says, that such servants are called field-keepers, or *crow-keepers*. STEEVENS.

436. *Draw me a clothier’s yard.*] Perhaps the poet had in his mind a stanza of the old ballad of *Chevy-Chace*:

“ An arrow of a *cloth-yard* long,

“ Up to the head drew he,” &c. STEEVENS.

439. ———*the brown bills.*] A *bill* was a kind of battle-axe:

“ Which is the constable’s house?—

“ At the sign of the *brown bill*.”

*Blurt Mr. Constable, 1602.*

Again, in Marlow’s *King Edward II.* 1622:

“ Lo, with a band of bowmen and of pikes,

“ *Brown bills*, and targetiers,” &c. STEEVENS.

440. *O, well-flown bird!*] Lear is here raving of archery, and shooting at *buts*, as is plain by the words *i’ the clout*, that is, the *white* mark they set up and aim at: hence the phrase, to *hit the white*. So that we must read, *O, well-flown barb!* *i. e.* the *barbed* or *bearded* arrow. WARBURTON.

So, in the *Two Maids of Moreclache*, 1609:

“ Change your mark, shoot at a white; come stick me in the *clout*, sir.”

Again, in *Tamburlaine*, &c. 1590:

“ For kings are *clouts* that every man shoots at.”

*Well-flown bird* was the falconers expression when the hawk



hawk was successful in her flight; and is so used in  
*A Woman kill'd with Kindness.* STEEVENS.

441. ———Give the word.] Lear supposes himself in  
a garrison, and before he lets Edgar pass, requires  
the watch-word. JOHNSON.

445. —Ha! Goneril!—with a white beard!——] So  
reads the folio, properly; the quarto, which the latter  
editors have followed, has, *Ha! Goneril, ha! Regan!*  
*they flattered me, &c.* which is not so forcible.

JOHNSON.

446. —They flattered me like a dog;—] They played  
the spaniel to me. JOHNSON.

449. —When the rain came to wet me, &c.] This  
seems to be an allusion to king Canute's behaviour,  
when his courtiers flattered him as lord of the sea.

STEEVENS.

455. *The trick of that voice—*] *Trick* (says Sir Tho-  
mas Hanmer, is a word frequently used for the *air*,  
*or that peculiarity in a face, voice, or gesture, which dis-*  
*tinguishes it from others.* We still say, “—he has a  
*trick* of winking with his eyes, of speaking loud,” &c.

STEEVENS.

468. *To't luxury, &c.*] *Luxury* was the ancient  
appropriate term for *incontinence*. See Mr. Collins's  
note on *Troilus and Cressida*, act v. sc. 2. STEEVENS.

470. *Whose face between her forks—*] The construc-  
tion is not “whose face between her *forks*,” &c. but  
“whose face presages snow between her *forks*.” So,  
in *Timon*, act iv. sc. 3.

M

“Whose



“ Whose blush does thaw the consecrated snow  
 “ That lies on Dian’s lap.” *Canons of Criticism.*

To preserve the modesty of Mr. Edwards’s happy explanation, I can only hint a reference to the word *fourcheure* in Cotgrave’s *Dictionary*. STEEVENS.

473. *The fitchew,——*] A pole-cat. POPE.  
 See before in catch-word Alphabet.

——*nor the soyled horse,——*] *Soyled horse*, is a term used for a horse that has been fed with hay and corn in the stable during the winter, and is turned out in the spring to take the first flush of grass, or has it cut and carried in to him. This at once cleanses the animal, and fills him with blood. STEEVENS.

475. *Down to the waist they’re centaurs,*] In the *Malecontent*, is a thought as singular as this:

“ ’Tis now about the immodest *waist* of night.”

STEEVENS.

478. *Beneath is all the fiends’* ;] According to Grecian superstition, every limb of us was consigned to the charge of some particular deity. Gower, *De Confessione Amantis*, enlarges much on it, and concludes by saying :

“ And Venus throughe the letcherie

“ For whiche thei hir deifie,

“ She kept all doune the remenant

“ To thilke office appertainant.”

COLLINS.

494. *What, with the case of eyes?*] The *case of eyes* is the *socket* of either eye. Statius in his first *Thebaid*, has a similar expression. Speaking of Oedipus, he says :



“Tunc *vacuos orbes* crudum ac miserabile vitæ  
 “Supplicium, ostentat cœlo, manibusque cruentis  
 “Pulsat *inane solum*.

“*Inane solum*, i. e. *vacui oculorum loci*.”

Shakspeare has the expression again in *The Winter's Tale*:

“—they seem'd almost, with staring on one another, to tear *the cases* of their eyes.” STEEVENS.

515. *Robes, and furr'd gowns, hide all*.——] From *hide all* to *accuser's lips*, the whole passage is wanting in the first edition, being added, I suppose, at his revisal. JOHNSON.

518. ——*I'll able 'em*.:] An old phrase signifying to qualify, or uphold them. So Scogan, contemporary with Chaucer, says:

“Set all my life after thyne ordinance,  
 “And *able me* to mercie or thou deme.”

WARBURTON.

529. *Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air,  
 We wawle and cry*.——]

“Vagitûque locum lugubri complet, ut æquum  
 est

“Cui santum in vitâ restat transire malorum.”

*Lucretius*. STEEVENS.

533. ——*This a good block?*——] Upon the king's saying, *I will preach to thee*, the poet seems to have meant him to pull off his *hat*, and keep turning it, and feeling it, in the attitude of one of the preachers of those times (whom I have seen so represented in ancient prints) till the idea of *felt*, which the good

M i j

*hat*



*hat* or *block* was made of, raises the stratagem in his brain of shoeing a troop of horse with a substance soft as that which he held and moulded between his hands. This makes him start from his preachment.—*Block* anciently signified the *head part* of the hat, or *the thing on which a hat is formed*, and sometimes the hat itself.—See *Much Ado about Nothing* :

“ He weares his faith but as the fashion of his *hat* ;  
 “ it changes with the next *block* .”

Again, in Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Wit at several Weapons* :

“ I am so haunted with this broad-brim’d *hat*  
 “ Of the last progress *block*, with the young hat-band .”

Shakspeare, however, might have adopted the stratagem of shoeing a troop of horse with *felt*, from the following passage in Fenton’s *Tragicall Discourses*, 4to bl. let. 1567 : “ — he attyreth himselfe for the purpose in a night gowne girt to hym, with a paire of shoes of *felte*, leaste the noyse of his feete shoulde discover his goinge .” P. 58.

Again, in *Hay any Worke for a Cooper*, an ancient pamphlet, no date : “ Their adversaries are very eager : the saints in heaven have *felt* o’ their tongues.

STEEVENS.

541. *The natural fool of fortune*.] So, in *Romeo and Juliet* :

“ O, I am *fortune*’s fool ! STEEVENS.

546. ———— *a man of salt*,] I believe, *a man of salt is a man made up of tears*. In *All’s Well that Ends Well*,



Well, we meet with—your *salt tears*' head ; and in *Troilus and Cressida*, the *salt* of broken tears.

Again, in *Coriolanus* :

“ He has betray'd your business, and giv'n up,

“ For certain drops of *salt*, your city Rome.”

MALONE.

549. Gent. *Good sir*,——] These words I have restored from one of the quartos. In the other, they are omitted. The folio reads :

——a *smug* bridegroom—— STEEVENS.

554. *Then there's life in't*.——] The case is not yet desperate. JOHNSON.

567. ——the *main descry*  
*Stands on the hourly thought*.] The *main* body is *expected* to be *descry'd* every hour. The expression is harsh. JOHNSON.

578. ——made tame to *fortune's blows*.] The quartos read :

——made *lame* by *fortune's blows*. STEEVENS.

588. *Briefly thyself remember*.——] *i. e.* Quickly recollect the past offences of thy life, and recommend thyself to heaven. WARBURTON.

598. ——go your *gait*,——] *Gang your gate* is a common expression in the North. In the last rebellion, when the Scotch soldiers had finished their exercise, instead of our term of dismissal, their phrase was, *Gang your gaits*. STEEVENS.

602. ——che *wor' ye*,——] *I warn you*. Edgar counterfeits the western dialect. JOHNSON.

M i i j

602.



602. ———your costard,——] *Costard*, i. e. head.

STEEVENS.

——my bat,] i. e. club. So, in *Spenser*:

“——a handsome *bat* he held,

“On which he leaned, as one far in eld.”

So, in *Mucedorus*, 1668:

“With this my *bat* I will beat out thy brains.”

Again, in the *Pinner of Wakefield*, 1599:

“——let every thing be ready,

“And each of you a good *bat* on his neck.”

STEEVENS.

605. ———no matter vor your foins.] *To foyn*, is to make what we call a *thrust* in fencing. Shakspeare often uses the word.

STEEVENS.

631. ———affectionate servant.] After *servant*, one of the quartos has this strange continuation: “——and for you her owne for venter, Gonerill.”

STEEVENS.

632. *O undistinguish'd space of woman's wit!*] So the first quarto reads, but the first folio better, *will*. I have no idea of the meaning of the first reading, but the other is extremely satirical; the *varium & mutabile semper*, of Virgil, more strongly and happily expressed. The mutability of a woman's *will*, which is so sudden, that there is no space or distance between the present *will* and the next. Honest Sancho explains this thought with infinite humour, *Entre el si y el no de la muger, no me atreveria yo à poner una punta d'alfiler. Between a woman's yes and no I would not undertake to thrust a pin's point.*

WARBURTON.

635. *Thee I'll rake up,——]* I'll cover thee. In Staffordshire,



Staffordshire, to *rake* the fire, is to cover it with fuel for the night. JOHNSON.

638. ———*the death-practis'd duke:*] The duke of Albany, whose death is machinated by *practice* or treason. JOHNSON.

641. ———*and have ingenious feeling*] *Ingenious feeling* signifies a feeling from an understanding not disturbed or disordered, but which, representing things as they are, makes the sense of pain the more exquisite.

WARBURTON.

643. ———*sever'd*——] The quartos read *fenced*.

STEEVENS.

651. ———*every measure fail me.*] All good which I shall allot thee, or *measure out* to thee, will be scanty. JOHNSON.

655. *Be better suited:*] *i. e.* Be better drest, put on a better suit of clothes. STEEVENS.

656. *These weeds are memories of those worser hours;*] *Memories*, *i. e.* Memorials, remembrancers. Shakspeare uses the word in the same sense, *As You Like It*, act ii. sc. 3.

“O, my sweet master! O you *memory*

“Of old Sir Rowland!”—— STEEVENS.

So, in Stowe's *Survey of London*, 1618:—“A printed *memorie* hanging up in a table at the entrance into the church-door.” MALONE.

659. ———*shortens my made intent;*] An *intent made*, is an *intent formed*. So we say in common language, to *make a design*, and to *make a resolution*.

JOHNSON.



668. *Of this child-changed father !]* *i. e.* Changed to a child by his years and wrongs ; or, perhaps, reduced to this condition by his children. STEEVENS.

Lear is become insane, and this is the change referred to. Insanity is not the property of second childhood, but dotage. Consonant to this explanation is what Cordelia almost immediately adds :

“ O my dear father ! restoration hang

“ Thy medicine on my lip ; and let this kiss

“ Repair those violent harms that my two sisters

“ Have in thy reverence made !” HENLEY.

673. *Ay, madam, &c.]* The folio gives these four lines to a *Gentleman*. One of the quartos (they were both printed in the same year, and for the same Printer) gives the two first to the *Doctor*, and the two next to *Kent*. The other quarto appropriates the two first to the *Doctor*, and the two following ones to a *Gentleman*. I have given the two first, which best belong to an attendant, to the *Gentleman* in waiting, and the other two to the *Physician*, on account of the caution contained in them, which is more suitable to his profession. STEEVENS.

In the folio the *Gentleman* and (as he is here called) the *Physician*, is one and the same person.

REMARKS.

677. *Very well,]* This and the following line I have restored from the quartos, STEEVENS.

679. ———Restoration, hang

*Thy medicine on my lips ; ———]* Restoration is recovery, personified. STEEVENS.

687.



687. All from *warring winds?* to *helm* inclusive, is omitted in the folio.

689. ———— *To watch (poor perdue!)*  
*With this thin helm? ————]*

The allusion is to the forlorn hope in an army, which are put upon desperate adventures, and called in French *enfants perdus*; she therefore calls her father, *poor perdu*.  
 WARBURTON.

The same allusion occurs in Sir W. Davenant's *Love and Honour*, 1649:

“ ———— I have endur'd  
 “ Another night would tire a *perdu*,  
 “ More than a wet furrow and a great frost.”

Again, in Cartwright's *Ordinary*:

“ ———— as for *perdues*,  
 “ Some choice sous'd fish brought couchant in a  
 dish  
 “ Among some fennel or some other grass,  
 “ Shews how they lye i' th' field.” STEEVENS.

Amongst other separate services in which the forlorn hope, or *enfants perdu*, were engaged, the night-watches seem to have been a common one. So Beaumont and Fletcher:

“ I am set here like a *perdu*,  
 “ To watch a fellow that has wrong'd my mistress.”

*Little French Lawyer*, act ii. sc. 2. WHALLEY.

690. ———— *Mine enemy's dog,*] Thus the folio. Both the quartos read, *Mine injurious dog*. Possibly the poet wrote—*Mine injurer's dog*.  
 STEEVENS.



696. *Had not concluded all.*—] The plain construction is this; *It is wonder that thy wits and life had not all ended.* JOHNSON.

So, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, c. viii.

“Ne spared they to strip her naked *all*.”

Again, in *Timon* :

“And dispossess her *all*.”

STEEVENS.

708. *I am mightily abus'd.*—] I am strangely imposed on by appearances; I am in a strange mist of uncertainty. JOHNSON.

716. *No, sir, you must not kneel.*] This circumstance I find in the old play on the same subject, apparently written by another hand, and published before any edition of Shakspeare's tragedy had made its appearance. As it is always difficult to say whether these accidental resemblances proceed from imitation, or a similarity of thinking on the same occasion, I can only point out this to the reader, to whose determination I leave the question. STEEVENS.

718. *Pray do not mock me.*] So, in *The Winter's Tale*, act v.

“——Let no man *mock* me,

“For I will kiss her.”

STEEVENS.

720. *Fourscore and upward*;—] Here the folio (and the folio only) adds—*not an hour more or less*. The authenticity of this passage Sir Joshua Reynolds justly suspects. It was probably the interpolation of some player, and is better omitted, both in regard to sense and versification. STEEVENS.



739. *I fear, I am not in my perfect mind.*] The quarto reads :

*I fear, I am not perfect in my mind.* JOHNSON.

So one of the quartos. The other reads according to the present text. STEEVENS.

Both expressions have one meaning, and are equivalent to *σωφρονουντα* (St. Luke viii. 35.), in the narrative of the lunatick demoniack who had been just restored to his reason, and is represented as “clothed, and *in his right mind.*” HENLEY.

739. *——is cur'd——*] Thus the quartos. The folio reads,

*——is kill'd.* STEEVENS.

739. *And yet, &c.*] This is not in the folio.

JOHNSON.

740. *To make him even o'er the time——*] *i. e.* To reconcile it to his apprehension. WARBURTON.

746. What is printed in crotchets is not in the folio. It is at least proper, if not necessary ; and was omitted by the author, I suppose, for no other reason than to shorten the representation.

JOHNSON.



ACT V.

Line 3. ——— **O***F* alteration,] One of the quartos reads,

—————*of abdication.*

STEEVENS.

4. ———*his constant pleasure.*] His settled resolution.

JOHNSON.

12. *But have you never, &c.*] The *first* and *last* of these speeches, printed within crotchets, are inserted in Sir Thomas Hanmer's, Theobald's, and Dr. Warburton's editions; the two intermediate ones, which were omitted in all others, I have restored from the old quartos, 1608. Whether they were left out through negligence, or because the imagery contained in them might be thought too luxuriant, I cannot determine; but sure a material injury is done to the character of the *Bastard* by the omission; for he is made to deny that flatly at first, which the poet only meant to make him evade, or return slight answers to, till he is urged so far as to be obliged to shelter himself under an immediate falsehood. Query, however, whether Shakspeare meant us to believe that Edmund had *actually* found his way to the forefended place?

STEEVENS.

13. ———fore-fended *place*?] *Fore-fended* means *prohibited, forbidden.*

STEEVENS.

16. ———bosom'd *with her*,——] *Bosom'd* is used in



in this sense by Heywood, in *The Fair Maid of the West*, 1631:

“ We’ll crown our hopes and wishes with more  
pomp

“ And sumptuous cost, than Priam did his son

“ That night he *bosom’d* Helen.”

Again, in Heywood’s *Silver Age*, 1613:

“ With fair Alcmena, she that never *bosom’d*

“ Mortal, save thee.”

STEEVENS.

27. What is within the crotchets is omitted in the folio.

STEEVENS.

28. ———Where I could not be honest,

*I never yet was valiant:—*] This sentiment has already appeared in *Cymbeline*:

*Thou may’st be valiant in a better cause,*

*But now thou seem’st a coward.*

Again, in an ancient MS. play, entitled, *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy*:

“ That worke is never undertooke with corage,

“ That makes his master blush.” STEEVENS.

30. *Not bolds the king;—*] The quartos read *bolds*, and this may be the true reading. *This business* (says Albany) *touches us, as France invades our land, not as it bolds the king, &c. i. e. emboldens him to assert his former title.* Thus in the ancient interlude of *Hycke Scorne*:

“ Alas, that I had not one to *bold* me!”

STEEVENS.

35. *For these domestick and particular broils*] This is the reading of the folio. The quartos have it,



For these domestick doore particulars.

STEEVENS.

36. *Are not to question here.*] Thus the quartos.  
The folio reads,

*Are not the question here.*

STEEVENS.

39. *Edm.*] This speech is wanting in the folio.

STEEVENS.

60. *Here is the guess, &c.*] The modern editors read, *Hard* is the guess. So the quartos. But had the discovery been diligent, the guess could not have proved so difficult. I have given the true reading from the folio.

STEEVENS.

63. *We will greet the time.*] We will be ready to meet the occasion.

JOHNSON.

70. *And hardly shall I carry out my side,*

*Her husband being alive.——*] That is, “I shall scarcely be able to make out my game.” The allusion is to a party at cards, and he is afraid he shall not be able to make his side successful.

The phrase is clearly explained in Massinger’s *Great Duke of Florence*, where Cozemo says to Petronella, who had challenged him to drink a second bowl of wine :

“Pray you, pause a little,

“If I hold your cards, *I shall pull down the side* ;

“I am not good at the game.”

MONCK MASON.

77. *——for my state*

*Stands on me, &c.*]

I do not think that *for* stands in this place as a word  
of



of inference or causality. The meaning is rather, *Such is my determination concerning Lear; as for my state it requires now, not deliberation, but defence and support.* JOHNSON.

For the import of the word FOR in this, and many other passages of Shakspeare, see Mr. Horne Tooke's *Diversions at Purley.* HENLEY.

79. The reader, who is curious to know how far Shakspeare was indebted to the *Arcadia*, will find a chapter entitled—"The pitifull State and Storie of the Paphlagonian unkinde King, and his kinde Sonne; first related by the Sonne, then by the blind Father." P. 141. edit. 1590. quarto. STEEVENS.

90. *Ripeness is all.*—] *i. e.* To be ready, prepared, is all. The same sentiment occurs in *Hamlet*, act v.

"—if it be not now, yet it will come: *the readiness is all.*" STEEVENS.

91. *And that's true too.*] Omitted in the quarto.

STEEVENS.

108. *And take upon us the mystery of things,  
As if we were God's spies.*—]

As if we were angels commissioned to survey and report the lives of men, and were consequently endowed with the power of prying into the original motives of action and the mysteries of conduct. JOHNSON.

110. ————*packs and sets*———] Packs is used for combinations or collection, as is a pack of cards. For sets, I think sets might be more commodiously read. So we say, *affairs are now managed by a new set.* Set, however, may well stand. JOHNSON.



113. *Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,*

*The gods themselves throw incense.*——] The thought is extremely noble, and expressed in a sublime of imagery that Seneca fell short of on the like occasion. “*Ecce spectaculum dignum ad quod respiciat intentus operi suo Deus : ecce par Deo dignum, vir fortis cum mala fortuna compositus.*”

WARBURTON.

116. *And fire us hence, like foxes.*——] I have been informed that it is usual to *smoke foxes* out of their holes.

So, in Harrington's translation of *Ariosto*, book xxvii. stan. 17.

“*Ev'n as a foxe whom smoke and fire doth fright*

“*So as he dare not in the ground remaine,*

“*Bolts out, and thro' the smoke and fire he flieth*

“*Into the tarrier's mouth, and there he dieth.*”

Again, in *Every Man out of his Humour* :

“*——my walk, and all,*

“*You smoke me from, as if I were a fox.*”

STEEVENS.

117. *The goujeers shall devour them,*——] The *goujeres*, i. e. *Morbus Gallicus*. *Gouge*, Fr. signifies one of the common women attending a camp ; and as that disease was first dispersed over Europe by the French army, and the women who followed it, the first name it obtained among us was the *gougeries*, i. e. the disease of the *gouges*. HANMER.

The resolute John Florio has sadly mistaken these *goujeers*. He writes “*With a good yeare to thee !*”  
and



and gives it in Italian, “ *Il mal’ anno che dio ti dia.*”

FARMER.

117. ——— *flesh and fell.*] So, Skelton’s Works,  
p. 257 :

“ *Nakyd asyde*

“ *Neither flesh nor fell.*”

Chaucer uses *fell* and *bones* for *skin* and *bones* :

“ And said that he and all his kinne at once,

“ Were worthy to be brent with *fell* and *bone.*”

*Troilus and Cresseide.* GREY.

In the *Dyar’s Play*, among the *Chester Collection of Mysteries*, in the Museum, *Antichrist* says :

“ I made thee man of *flesh* and *fell.*”

STEEVENS.

126. ——— Thy great employment

*Will not bear question ;* ——— ] The meaning,

I apprehend, is, that the important business in hand, did not admit of *debate* : he must instantly resolve to do it, or not. *Question*, here, as in many other places in these plays, signifies *discourse—conversation*.

See *Hamlet*, act i.

“ Thou com’st in such a *questionable* shape.”

—and the note there.

MALONE.

133. *I cannot draw, &c.*] These two lines I have restored from the old quarto.

STEEVENS.

146. *And turn our imprest lances in our eyes,*] *i. e.*  
Turn the *launcemen*, which are *press’d* into our service, against us.

So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, act iii. sc. vii :

N i i j

“ ———people



“———people

“Ingrost by swift *impress*.”

STEEVENS.

150. *At this time, &c.*] This passage, well worthy of restoration, is omitted in the folio. JOHNSON.

155. *Requires a fitter place.*] *i. e.* The determination of the question, what shall be done with Cordelia and her father, should be reserved for greater privacy. STEEVENS.

162. *Bore the commission of——*] *Commission*, for authority. WARBURTON.

163. *The which immediacy——*] *Immediacy* here implies proximity without intervention; in rank, or such a plenary delegation of authority as to constitute the person on whom it is conferred, *another SELF: alter et idem.* HENLEY.

166. *In his own grace——*] *Grace* here means *accomplishments or honours.* STEEVENS.

173. *The eye that told you so, look'd but a-squint.*] Alluding to the proverb: “Love being jealous makes a good eye look *asquint*.” See Ray’s *Collection*.

STEEVENS.

177. *——the walls are thine:]* A metaphorical phrase taken from the camp, and signifying, *to surrender at discretion.* WARBURTON.

181. *The let alone lies not in your good-will.]* Whether he shall not or shall, depends not on your choice.

JOHNSON.

Albany means to tell his wife, that, however she might want the power, she evidently did not want the inclination to prevent the match. REMARKS.



186. ———*thy arrest.*] The quartos read—*thine attaint.* STEEVENS.

193. *An interlude!*——] This short exclamation of Goneril is added in the folio edition, I suppose, only to break the speech of Albany, that the exhibition on the stage might be more distinct and intelligible.

JOHNSON.

195. ——*thy person.*] The quartos read—*thy head.* STEEVENS.

201. ——*poison.*] The folio reads *medicine.*

STEEVENS.

208. —*a herald.*] This speech I have restored from the quartos. STEEVENS.

216. *Sound trumpet.*] I have added this from the quartos. STEEVENS.

217. ——*within the lists of the army,*——] The quartos read:

——*within the host of the army.*—— STEEVENS.

231. *Yet am I noble, &c.*] One of the quartos reads:

——*yet are I mou't*

*Where is the adversarie I come to cope withal?*

——*are I mou't,* is, I suppose, a corruption of—*ere I move it.* STEEVENS.

239. *Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,*

*My oath, and my profession.*——]

The *privilege* of this *oath* means the privilege gained by taking the oath administered in the regular initiation of a knight professed.

JOHNSON.

The quartos read—it is the privilege of *my tongue.*

STEEVENS.



245. *Conspirant 'gainst*——] The quartos read :

*Conspicuate 'gainst*.—— STEEVENS.

254. *And that thy tongue some say of breeding breathes ;]*  
*Say* is sample, a taste. So, in *Sidney* :

“ So good a *say* invites the eye

“ A little downward to espy——”

Again, in *Holinshed*, p. 847: “ He (C. Wolsey) made dukes and erles to serve him of wine, with a *say* taken,” &c. To take the *assaie* was the technical term.

STEEVENS.

262. Alb. *Save him, save him !]* He desired that Edmund's life might be spared at present, only to obtain his confession, and to convict him openly by his own letter. JOHNSON.

264. —*thou wast not bound to answer]* One of the quartos reads :

——*thou art not bound to offer, &c.* STEEVENS.

273. *Monster, know'st thou this paper ?]* So the quarto ; but the folio :

Most monstrous ! O, know'st thou, &c.

JOHNSON.

“ Knowest thou these letters ?” says Leir to Ragan, in the old anonymous play, when he shews her both her own and her sister's letters, which were written to procure his death. Upon which she snatches the letters and tears them. STEEVENS.

281. *Let us exchange charity.]* Our author by negligence gives his Heathens the sentiments and practices of Christianity. In *Hamlet* there is the same solemn act of final reconciliation, but with exact propriety, for the personages are Christians :

“ Exchange



“Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet,”  
&c. JOHNSON.

This is a hasty observation.—In the *Cyropædia* of Xenophon, the dying declaration of the Preceptor bears a striking resemblance to “*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!*” HENLEY.

286. —to scourge us:] Thus the quartos. The folio reads:

——to plague us. STEEVENS.

290. ——full circle;——] Quarto, *full circled*.

JOHNSON.

302. *That we the pain of death would hourly bear,*  
*Rather than die at once)——]*

The folio reads,

*That we the pain of death would hourly die.*

Mr. Pope, whom I have followed, reads,

—————would hourly bear.

The quartos give the passage thus:

*That with the pain of death would hourly die,*

*Rather than die at once——*

STEEVENS.

323. *Edg.*] The lines between crotchets are not in the folio. JOHNSON.

323. ——*This would have seem'd a period*

*To such as love not sorrow; but, another;—*

*To amplify too much, would make much more,*

*And top extremity!——]*

The sense may probably be this. *This would have seemed a period to such as love not sorrow; but—another,* i. e. but I must add *another*, i. e. another period, another



another kind of conclusion to my story, such as will increase the horrors of what has been already told.

So, in *King Richard II*:

I play the torturer, by small and small,

To lengthen out the worst——

STEEVENS.

332. ——*threw him on my father*;] The quartos read,

“——*threw me on my father.*”

The modern editors have corrected the passage, as it is now printed.

STEEVENS.

347. ——*O! she's dead!*] Omitted in the quartos.

STEEVENS.

348. *Who, man, speak?*] The folio reads, *Who dead? Speak man.*

STEEVENS.

354. *This judgment, &c.*] If Shakspeare had studied Aristotle all his life, he would not perhaps have been able to mark with more precision the distinct operations of *terror* and *pity*.

TYRWHITT.

356. *Here comes Kent, sir.*] The manner in which Edgar here mentions Kent, seems to require the lines which are inserted from the first edition in the foregoing scene.

JOHNSON.

379. *Give it the captain.*] The quartos read:

——Take my sword, the captain.

Give it the captain.

STEEVENS.

384. *That she fordid herself.*] To *fordo*, signifies to *destroy*. It is used again in *Hamlet*, act v:

“——*did, with desperate hand,*

“*Fordo his own life.*”

STEEVENS.



386. — [*Cordelia dead in his arms.*] This princess, according to the old historians, retired with victory from the battle which she conducted in her father's cause, and thereby replaced him on the throne: but in a subsequent one fought against her (after the death of the old king) by the sons of Goneril and Regan, she was taken, and died miserably in prison. The poet found this in history, and was therefore willing to precipitate her death, which he knew had happened but a few years after. The dramattick writers of this age suffered as small a number of their heroes and heroines to escape, as possible; nor could the filial piety of this lady, any more than the innocence of Ophelia, prevail on Shakspeare to extend her life beyond her misfortunes. STEEVENS.

394. *Or image, &c.*] These two exclamations are given to Edgar and Albany in the folio, to animate the dialogue, and employ all the persons on the stage; but they are very obscure. JOHNSON.

*Or image of that horror?*] In the first folio this short speech of Edgar (which seems to be only an addition to the preceding one of Kent) has a full stop at the end. *Is this conclusion, says Kent, such as the present turn of affairs seemed to promise? Or is it only,* replies Edgar, *a representation of that horror which we suppose to be real?* A similar expression occurs at the beginning of the play.—*I have told you what I have seen and heard, but faintly; nothing like the image and horror of it.* STEEVENS.

It appears to me, that by the *promised end*, Kent  
does



does not mean that conclusion which the state of their affairs seemed to promise, but the end of the world. In St. Mark's Gospel, when Christ foretells to his disciples the end of the world, and is describing to them the signs that were to precede and mark the approach of our final dissolution, he says, "For in those days *shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation, which God created, unto this time, neither shall be :*" and afterwards, he says, "Now the brother shall betray the brother to death; and the father the son; and *children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.*" Kent, in contemplating the unexampled scene of exquisite affliction which was then before him, and the unnatural attempt of Goneril and Regan against their father's life, recollects these passages, and asks, "whether that was the end of the world, that had been foretold us?" To which Edgar adds, "or only a representation and resemblance of that horror."

There is evidently an allusion to the same passages in Scripture, in a speech of Gloster's, which he makes in the second scene of the first act :

These late eclipses in the sun, &c.——

If any criticks should urge it as an objection to this explanation, that the persons of the drama are Pagans, and of course unacquainted with the Scriptures, they give Shakspeare credit for more accuracy than I fear he possessed.

MONCK MASON.

Does not the exclamation (which is uttered in soliloquy by Kent, whilst he is contemplating the dead Cordelia



Cordelia in the arms of her distracted father) refer to the confidence expressed in her letter to himself, “that—seeking to give losses their remedies—she should find a time amidst the enormities of the state, to obtain the full effect of her purpose?”—

“Is this the promised end!”——

As the words *promised end* (supposing this to be their reference in the mouth of Kent) were not addressed to Edgar, there is no necessity for considering them as understood by him in their proper sense: his resumption therefore, or rather adaptation of them, may not only admit, but even require a different interpretation. Mr. Mason’s is an ingenious, and may be the true one. For, though the passage of St. Mark which he cites, does NOT refer to *the end of the world* (as he might have learnt from the 30th verse of the same chapter), but to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish state, yet the prediction itself is vulgarly received in the sense to which he applies it.

HENLEY.

395. *Fall, and cease!*] This exclamation of Albany, like the other, may have a meaning affixed to it. He is looking with attention on the pains employed by Lear to recover his child, and knows to what miseries he must survive, when he finds them to be ineffectual. Having these images present to his eyes and imagination, he cries out, *Rather fall, and cease to be, at once, than continue in existence only to be wretched.* So, in *All’s Well*, &c. to *cease* is used for to *die*: and



in *Hamlet*, the death of majesty is called “the *cease* of majesty.”

Again, in *All's Well that Ends Well*:

“Or, ere they meet, in me, O nature, *cease*!

“Both suffer under this complaint you bring,

“And both shall *cease*, without your remedy.”

STEEVENS.

396. *This feather stirs;—*] So, in *Vittoria Corom-  
bona*, 1612:

“Fetch a looking-glass, see if his breath will not stain it; or pull some *feathers* from my pillow, and lay them to his lips.”

STEEVENS.

A common experiment of applying a light feather to the lips of a person supposed to be dead, to see whether he breathes. There is the same thought in *Henry IV.* Part II. act iv. sc. 4:

—————By his gates of breath

*There lies a downy feather, which stirs not.*

And to express a total stillness in the air, in Donne's poem, called *The Calm*, there is the like sentiment, which Jonson, in his conversation with Drummond of Hawthornden, highly commended:

“—————in one place lay

“*Feathers and dust, to-day and yesterday.*”

WHALLEY.

410. *I have seen the day, with my good biting faulchion  
I would have made them skip——]*

It is difficult for an author who never peruses his first works, to avoid repeating some of the same thoughts  
in



in his later productions. What Lear has just said, had been anticipated by Justice Shallow in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: “I have seen the time with my long sword I would have made you four tall fellows skip like rats.” It is again repeated in *Othello*:

“————I have seen the day

“That with this little arm and this good sword

“I have made my way,” &c. STEEVENS.

416. *This is a dull sight.*——] This passage is wanting in the quartos. STEEVENS.

423. ——*of difference and decay,*] Decay for misfortunes. WARBURTON.

The quartos read:

“That from your *life* of difference and decay.”

STEEVENS.

427. ——fore-doom’d *themselves,*] Thus the quartos. The folio reads——*fordone*.

Have *fore-doom’d themselves* is—have anticipated their own doom. To *fordo* is to destroy. STEEVENS.

430. ——*he says.*] The quartos read——*he sees,* which may be right. STEEVENS.

436. *What comfort to this great decay, may come,*] This *great decay* is Lear, whom Shakspeare poetically calls so, and means the same as if he had said, *this piece of decay’d royalty, this ruin’d majesty*. STEEVENS.

A preceding passage, in which Gloster laments Lear’s frenzy, fully supports Mr. Steevens’s interpretation:

“O, ruin’d *piece of nature!* This great world

“Shall so wear out to nought.” MALONE.



439. ———— *You, to your rights ;  
With boot, and such addition as your honours  
Have more than merited.———]*

These lines are addressed to Kent as well as to Edgar, else the word *honours* would not have been in the plural number. By *honours* is meant *honourable conduct*.

MONCK MASON.

440. *With boot,—]* With advantage, with increase.

JOHNSON.

444. *And my poor fool is hang'd!——]* This is an expression of tenderness for his dead Cordelia (not his fool, as some have thought), on whose lips he is still intent, and dies away while he is searching for life there.

*Poor fool*, in the age of Shakspeare, was an expression of endearment.

I may add, that *the Fool* of Lear was long ago forgotten. Having filled the space allotted him in the arrangement of the play, he appears to have been silently withdrawn in the 6th scene of the third act.—That the thoughts of a father, in the bitterest of all moments, while his favourite child lay dead in his arms, should recur to the antick who had formerly diverted him, has somewhat in it that I cannot reconcile to the idea of genuine sorrow and despair.

Besides this, Cordelia was recently hanged ; but we know not that the *Fool* had suffered in the same manner, nor can imagine why he should. The party adverse to Lear was little interested in the fate of his jester. The only use of him was to contrast and alleviate



alleviate the sorrows of his master; and that purpose being fully answered, the poet's solicitude about him was at an end.

The term—*poor fool*, might indeed have misbecome the mouth of a vassal commiserating the untimely end of a princess, but has no impropriety when used by a weak, old, distracted king; in whose mind the distinctions of nature only survive, while he is uttering his last frantick exclamations over a murdered daughter.

Should the foregoing remark, however, be thought erroneous, the reader will forgive it, as it serves to introduce some contradictory observations from a critick, in whose taste and judgment too much confidence cannot easily be placed. STEEVENS.

I confess, I am one of those who *have thought* that Lear means his *Fool*, and not *Cordelia*. If he means *Cordelia*, then what I have always considered as a beauty, is of the same kind as the accidental stroke of the pencil that produced the foam.—Lear's affectionate remembrance of the *Fool* in this place, I used to think, was one of those strokes of genius, or of nature, which are so often found in Shakspeare, and in him only.

Lear appears to have a particular affection for this *Fool*, whose fidelity in attending him, and endeavouring to divert him in his distress, seems to deserve all his kindness.

*Poor fool and knave*, says he, in the midst of the thunder-storm, *I have one part in my heart that's sorry yet for thee.*

It



It does not therefore appear to me, to be allowing too much consequence to the *Fool*, in making Lear bestow a thought on him, even when in still greater distress. Lear is represented as a good-natured, passionate, and rather weak old man; it is the old age of a cocker'd spoilt boy. There is no impropriety in giving to such a character those tender domestick affections, which would ill become a more heroick character, such as Othello, Macbeth, or Richard III.

The words—*No, no, no life*; I suppose to be spoken, not tenderly, but with passion: Let nothing now live—let there be universal destruction;—*Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life, and thou no breath at all?*

It may be observed, that as there was a necessity, the necessity of propriety at least, that this *Fool*, the favourite of the author, of Lear, and consequently of the audience, should not be lost or forgot, it ought to be known what became of him.—However, it must be acknowledged, that we cannot infer much from thence; Shakspeare is not always attentive to finish the figures of his groups.

I have only to add, that if an actor, by adopting the interpretation mentioned above, of applying the words *poor fool* to Cordelia, the audience would, I should imagine, think it a strange mode of expressing the grief and affection of a father for his dead daughter, and that daughter a queen.—The words *poor fool*, are undoubtedly expressive of endearment; and Shakspeare himself, in another place, speaking of a dying animal, calls it *poor dappled fool*: but it never is, nor  
never



never can be used with any degree of propriety, but to commiserate some very inferior object, which may be loved, without much esteem or respect.

Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

448. *Pray you, undo this button,——*] The Rev. Dr. J. Warton judiciously observes, that the swelling and heaving of the heart is described by *this* most expressive circumstance.

So, in the *Honest Lawyer*, 1616 :

“———oh my heart!——

“It beats so it has *broke my buttons.*”

Again, in *King Richard III.*:

“———Ah, cut my lace asunder,

“That my pent heart may have some scope to beat,

“Or else I swoon with this dead-killing news!”

Again, in *The Winter's Tale* :

“O, cut my lace ; lest my heart, cracking it,

“Break too!”———

and, as Mr. Malone adds, from N. Field's *A Woman's a Weathercock*, 1612 :

“———swell heart ! *buttons* fly open !

“Thanks, gentle doublet, else my heart had broke.”

STEEVENS.

455. *——this tough world.*] Thus all the old copies. Mr. Pope changed it to *rough*, but, perhaps, without necessity. This *tough* world is this *obdurate rigid* world.

STEEVENS.

———*I must not say, no.*] The modern editors have supposed that Kent expires after he has repeated these



these two last lines ; but the speech rather appears to be meant for a despairing than a dying man ; and as the old editions give no marginal direction for his death, I have forborn to insert any.

I take this opportunity of retracting a declaration which I had formerly made on the faith of another person, viz. that the quartos, 1608, were exactly alike. I have since discovered that they vary one from another in many instances. STEEVENS.

The second folio, at the end of this speech, has the word—*Dyes*, in the margin. REMARKS.

465. *The weight of this sad time, &c.*] This speech, from the authority of the old quarto, is rightly placed to Albany : in the edition by the players, it is given to Edgar, by whom, I doubt not, it was of custom spoken. And the case was this : he who played Edgar, being a more favourite actor than he who performed Albany, in spite of decorum it was thought proper he should have the last word. THEOBALD.

THE END.





# ANNOTATIONS

B Y

SAM. JOHNSON & GEO. STEEVENS,

A N D

THE VARIOUS COMMENTATORS

U P O N

*JULIUS CÆSAR,*

WRITTEN BY

WILL. SHAKSPERE.

---

---

—*SIC ITUR AD ASTRA.*

VIRG.

---

---

L O N D O N :

*Printed for, and under the Direction of,*

JOHN BELL, British-Library, STRAND,

Bookseller to His Royal Highness the PRINCE of WALES.

M D C C L X X X V I I .









ANNOTATIONS  
UPON  
JULIUS CÆSAR.

---

ACT I.

Line 19. **MAR.** *What meanest thou by that?*] As the Cobler, in the preceding speech, replies to *Flavius*, not to *Marullus*; 'tis plain, I think, this speech must be given to *Flavius*. **THEOBALD.**

I have replaced *Marullus*, who might properly enough reply to a saucy sentence directed to his colleague, and to whom the speech was probably given, that he might not stand too long unemployed upon the stage. **JOHNSON.**

The author of **THE REMARKS** would rather give the first speech to *Marullus*, than transfer the last to *Flavius*.



47. ———her banks,] As *Tyber* is always represented by the figure of a man, the feminine gender is improper. Milton says, that

“ ———the river of bliss

“ Rolls o’er Elysian flowers *her* amber stream ;”  
but he is speaking of the water, and not of its presiding power or genius. STEEVENS.

63. See, whe’r] *Whether*, thus abbreviated, is used by Ben Jonson :

“ Who shall doubt, Donne, *whe’r* I a poet be,

“ When I dare send my epigrams to thee ?”

STEEVENS.

67. ———deck’d with ceremonies.] *Ceremonies*, for religious ornaments. Thus afterwards he explains them by *Cæsar’s trophies*, i. e. such as he had dedicated to the gods. WARBURTON.

*Cæsar’s trophies*, are, I believe, the crowns which were placed on his statues. So, in Sir *Thomas North’s* translation : “ —There were set up images of *Cæsar* in the city with diadems on their heads, like kings. Those the two tribunes went and pulled down.”

STEEVENS.

78. This person was not *Decius*, but *Decimus Brutus*. The poet (as *Voltaire* has done since) confounds the characters of *Marcus* and *Decimus*. *Decimus Brutus* was the most cherished by *Cæsar* of all his friends, while *Marcus* kept aloof, and declined so large a share of his favours and honours, as the other had constantly accepted. *Velleius Paterculus*, speaking of *Decimus Brutus*, says,—“ ab his, quos miserat *Antonius*, jugulatus



jugulatus est, justissimasque optime de se merito viro C. Cæsari pœnas dedit. Cujus cum primus omnium amicorum fuisset, interfector fuit, et fortunæ, ex qua fructum tulerat, invidiam in auctorem relegabat, censabatque æquum, quæ acceperat à Cæsare, retinere, Cæsarem, quia illa dederat, perisse.” Lib. ii. c. 64.

STEEVENS.

Shakspeare’s mistake of *Decius* for *Decimus*, arose from the old translation of *Plutarch*. FARMER.

Lord Sterline has committed the same mistake in his *Julius Cæsar*. MALONE.

82. —in Antonius’ way.] The old copy generally reads *Antonio*, *Oflavio*, *Flavio*. The players were more accustomed to Italian than Roman terminations, on account of the many versions from Italian novels, and the many Italian characters in dramattick pieces formed on the same originals. STEEVENS.

107. *Sennet*.] I have been informed that *sennet* is derived from *senneste*, an antiquated French tune formerly used in the army; but the Dictionaries which I have consulted exhibit no such word.

In Decker’s *Satiromastix*, 1602 :

“ Trumpets sound a flourish, and then a *sennet*.”

In Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Knight of Malta*, a *synnet* is called a *flourish of trumpets*, but I know not on what authority. See a note on *King Henry VIII.* act ii. sc. 4.

*Sennet* may be a corruption from *sonata*, Ital.

STEEVENS.



117. ———strange a hand] *Strange*, is alien, unfamiliar, such as might become a stranger.

JOHNSON.

123. *passions of some difference*,] With a fluctuation of discordant opinions and desires. JOHNSON.

So, in *Coriolanus*, act v. scene iii.

“ ———thou hast set thy mercy and thy honour

“ *At difference in thee.*” STEEVENS.

135. *The eye sees not itself.*] So, Sir John Davies in his poem on *The Immortality of the Soul*, 1599 :

*Is it because the mind is like the eye,*

*Through which it gathers knowledge by degrees;*

*Whose rays reflect not, but spread outwardly;*

*Not seeing itself, when other things it sees?*

Again, in Marston's comedy of the *Fawne*, 1606 :

“ Thus few strike sail until they run on shelf;

“ *The eye sees all things but its proper self.*”

STEEVENS.

156. *To stale with ordinary oaths my love, &c.*] To invite every new protester to my affection by the stale or allurements of customary oaths. JOHNSON.

171. *And I will look on both indifferently;*] Dr. Warburton has a long note on this occasion, which is very trifling. When Brutus first names *honour* and *death*, he calmly declares them *indifferent*; but as the image kindles in his mind, he sets *honour* above *life*. Is not this natural? JOHNSON.

194. *But ere we could arrive the point propos'd,*] The verb *arrive* is used, without the preposition *at*, by Milton



Milton in the second book of *Paradise Lost*, as well as by Shakspeare in the third part of *King Henry VI.* act v.

“ ———those powers that the queen

“ Hath rais’d in Gallia have arriv’d our coast.”

And in *Coriolanus*, act ii.

“ ———arriving

“ A place of potency.”

STEEVENS.

206. *His coward lips did from their colour fly ;]* A plain man would have said, the colour fled from his lips, and not his lips from their colour. But the false expression was for the sake of as false a piece of wit : a poor quibble, alluding to a coward flying from his colours.

WARBURTON.

214. ———*get the start of the majestick world, &c.]* This image is extremely noble : it is taken from the Olympick games. *The majestick world* is a fine periphrasis for the *Roman empire* : their citizens set themselves on a footing with kings, and they called their dominion *Orbis Romanus*. But the particular allusion seems to be to the known story of Cæsar’s great pattern Alexander, who being asked, Whether he would run the course at the Olympick games, replied, *Yes, if the racers were kings.*

WARBURTON.

229. *Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well.]* A similar thought occurs in Heywood’s *Rape of Lucrece*, 1638 :

“ What diapason’s more in Tarquin’s name,

“ Than in a subject’s ? or what’s Tullia

B ij

“ More



“More in the sound, than should become the  
name

“Of a poor maid?” STEEVENS.

239. *That her wide walls]* The old copy reads  
*walks*, which may be right. STEEVENS.

243. *There was a Brutus once,]* i. e. *Lucius Junius*  
*Brutus*. STEEVENS.

244. *—eternal devil—]* L. J. *Brutus* (says  
*Cassius*) *would as soon have submitted to the perpetual do-*  
*minion of a dæmon, as to the lasting government of a king.*

STEEVENS.

255. *—chew upon this;]* Consider this at leisure;  
*ruminate* on this. JOHNSON.

258. *Under such hard—]* The old copy reads,  
*these hard—* STEEVENS.

270. *—ferret—]* A ferret has red eyes.

JOHNSON.

277. *Sleek-headed men, &c.]* So, in Sir Thomas  
North's translation of *Plutarch*, 1579: “When Cæsar's  
friends complained unto him of Antonius and Dola-  
bella, that they pretended some mischief towards him;  
he answered, as for those fat men and smooth-combed  
heads (quoth he), I never reckon of them: but those  
pale-visaged and carrion-lean people, I fear them most,  
meaning Brutus and Cassius.”

And again:

“Cæsar had Cassius in great jealousy, and sus-  
pected him much; whereupon he said on a time, to  
his friends, what will Cassius do, think you? I like  
not his pale looks.”

STEEVENS.



282. *Would he were fatter :—*] Jonson in his *Bartholomew-Fair*, 1614, unjustly sneers at this passage, in Knockham's speech to the Pig-woman : " Come, there's no malice in fat folks ; I never fear thee, an I can scape thy lean moon-calf there." WARBURTON.

322. *——one of these coronets ;*] So, in the old translation of *Plutarch* : " ——he came to Cæsar, and presented him a diadem wreathed about with laurel." STEEVENS.

351. *—a man of any occupation,*] Had I been a mechanick, one of the plebeians to whom he offer'd his throat. JOHNSON.

396. *Thy honourable metal may be wrought  
From what it is dispos'd :*] The best metal or temper may be worked into qualities contrary to its original constitution. JOHNSON.

—Rather, *different from* ; may be debased. \* \* \*

401. *If I were Brutus now, and he were Cassius,  
He should not humour me.*] This is a reflection on Brutus's ingratitude ; which concludes, as is usual on such occasions, in an encomium on his own better conditions. *If I were Brutus* (says he), *and Brutus, Cassius, he should not cajole me as I do him.* To *humour* signifies here to turn and wind him, by inflaming his passions. The Oxford editor alters the last line to

*Cæsar should not love me.*

What he means by it is not worth inquiring.

WARBURTON.



The meaning, I think, is this; *Cæsar loves Brutus, but if Brutus and I were to change places, his love should not humour me*, should not take hold of my affection, so as to make me forget my principles. JOHNSON.

410. —*Brought you Cæsar home?*] Did you attend Cæsar home? JOHNSON.

412. —*sway of earth*] The whole weight or momentum of this globe. JOHNSON.

424. *A common slave, &c.*] So, in the old translation of *Plutarch*: “——a slave of the souldiers that did cast a marvelous burning flame out of his hande, insomuch as they that saw it, thought he had bene burnt; but when the fire was out, it was found he had no hurt.” STEEVENS.

430. *Who glar'd upon me,——*] The first edition reads:

*Who glaz'd upon me——*

Perhaps, *Who gaz'd upon me.* JOHNSON.

*Glar'd* is certainly right. To *gaze* is only to look stedfastly, or with admiration. *Glar'd* has a singular propriety, as it expresses the furious scintillation of a lion's eyes: and, that a lion should appear full of fury, and yet attempt no violence, augments the prodigy. STEEVENS.

461. *Have bar'd my bosom to the thunder-stone, &c.*] So, in *King Lear*, act iv. in the quarto copies:

“To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?”

“In the most terrible and nimble stroke

“Of quick cross lightning?”—

Compare



Compare also Milton's *Arcades*, v. 51.

“ And heal the harms of thwarting thunder blue,  
 “ And what the *cross* dire looking planet smites.”

WARTON.

476. *Why birds, and beasts, from quality and kind ;]*  
 That is, Why they *deviate* from quality and nature.  
 This line might perhaps be more properly placed after  
 the next line :

*Why birds, and beasts, from quality and kind ;*  
*Why all these things change from their ordinance.*

JOHNSON.

477. —*and children calculate ;]* *Calculate* here signifies to foretel or prophesy : for the custom of foretelling fortunes by judicial astrology (which was at that time much in vogue) being performed by a long tedious calculation, Shakspeare, with his usual liberty, employs the *species* [calculate] for the *genus* [foretel].

WARBURTON.

Shakspeare found the liberty established. *To calculate a nativity* is the technical term. JOHNSON.

There is certainly no prodigy in old men's *calculating* from their past experience. The wonder is, that old men should not, and that children should. I would therefore point thus :

“ Why old men fools, and children calculate.”

BLACKSTONE.

489. —*prodigious grown,*] *Prodigious* is portentous. See *Midsummer Night's Dream*, act v. line 412, and *Note*.

STEEVENS.



493. *Have thewes and limbs——*] *Thewes* is an obsolete word implying *nerves* or *muscular strength*. It is used by Falstaff in the Second Part of *Henry IV.* and in *Hamlet*.

The two last folios, in which some words are injudiciously modernized, read *sineus*. STEEVENS.

515. *——every bondman——bears*

*The power to cancel his captivity.*]

So in *Cymbeline*, act v. line 183. Posthumus speaking of his *chains* :

“ *————take this life,*

“ *And cancel these cold bonds.*”

A similar mode of expression to the last occurs in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* :

“ *Quit me of these cold gyves.*” HENLEY.

527. *My answer must be made.*] I shall be called to account, and must *answer* as for seditious words.

JOHNSON.

530. *——Hold my hand :*] Is the same as, *Here's my hand*. JOHNSON.

531. *Be factious for redress——*] *Factious* seems here to mean *active*. JOHNSON.

543. *Is fev'rous, like the work——*] The old edition reads :

*Is favors, like the work——*

I think we should read ;

*In favour's like the work we have in hand,*

*Most bloody, fiery, and most terrible.*

*Favour* is look, countenance, appearance. JOHNSON.

To



To *favour* is to *resemble*. Thus Stanyhurst in his translation of the Third Book of Virgil's *Æneid*, 1582 :

“ With the petit town gates *favouring* the principal old portes.”

We may read *It* favours, or—Is *favour'd*—i. e. is in appearance or countenance like, &c. STEEVENS.

ACT II.

Line 1. — *I*N his orchard.] The modern editors read *garden*, but *orchard* seems anciently to have had the same meaning. STEEVENS.

That these two words were anciently synonymous, appears from a line in this play :

“ ————— He hath left you all his walks,  
“ His private arbours, and new-planted *orchards*  
“ On this side Tiber.”

In Sir T. North's *Translation of Plutarch*, the passage which Shakspeare has here copied, stands thus :  
“ He left his *gardens* and arbours unto people, which he had on this side of the river Tyber.” MALONE.

*Orchard* was anciently written *hort-yard*; hence its original meaning is obvious. HENLEY.

19. Remorse *from power* :] Remorse, for mercy.

WARBURTON.

*Remorse* (says the author of the *Revisal*) signifies the conscious uneasiness arising from a sense of having done  
done



done wrong; to extinguish which feeling, nothing hath so great a tendency as absolute uncontrolled power.

I think Warburton right.

JOHNSON.

*Remorse* is pity, and hath twice occurred in that sense in *Measure for Measure*.

STEEVENS.

21. ———common proof,] Common experiment.

JOHNSON.

24. *But when he once attains the upmost round,  
He then unto the ladder turns his back, &c.]*

So, in Daniel's *Civil Wars*, 1602:

“The aspirer once attain'd unto the top,  
“Cuts off those means by which himself got up:  
“And with a harder hand, and straighter rein,  
“Doth curb that looseness he did find before;  
“Doubting the occasion like might serve again:  
“His own example makes him fear the more.”

MALONE.

26. ———base degrees] Low steps. JOHNSON.

33. ———as his kind——] According to his nature.

JOHNSON.

40. *Is not to-morrow, boy, the first of March?*] We should read *ides*: for we can never suppose the speaker to have lost fourteen days in his account. He is here plainly ruminating on what the soothsayer told Cæsar [Act i.] in his presence. [—*Beware the ides of March.*] The boy comes back and says, *Sir, March is wasted fourteen days.* So that the *morrow* was the *ides of March*, as he supposed. For March, May, July, and October.



ber, had six nones each, so that the fifteenth of March was the *ides* of that month. WARBURTON.

66. *The genius, and the mortal instruments,*

*Are then in council—*] Shakspeare is describing what passes in a single bosom, the *insurrection* which a conspirator feels agitating the *little kingdom* of his own mind; when the *genius*, or power that watches for his protection, and the *mortal instruments*, the passions, which excite him to a deed of honour and danger, are in council and debate; when the desire of action, and the care of safety, keep the mind in continual fluctuation and disturbance. JOHNSON.

Instead of *instruments*, it should, I think, be *instrument*, and explained thus:

The *genius*, i. e. the soul or spirit, which should govern; and the *mortal instrument*, i. e. the man, with all his bodily, that is, earthly passions, such as envy, pride, malice, and ambition, *are then in council*, i. e. debating upon the horrid action that is to be done, the soul and rational powers dissuading, and the *mortal instrument*, man, with his bodily passions, prompting and pushing on to the horrid deed, whereby the state of man, like to a little kingdom, suffers then the nature of an insurrection, the inferior powers rising and rebelling against the superior. See this exemplified in *Macbeth's* soliloquy, and also by what *King John* says, act iv.

“ *Nay, in the body of this fleshly land,*

“ *This kingdom, this confine of blood and breath,*



“ *Hostility and civil tumult reigns*

“ *Between my conscience and my cousin's death.*”

SMITH.

The *genius* and the *mortal instruments*, are, I believe, no more than the *inventive faculty* and the *malignant passions* of the human heart. HENLEY.

65. *A phantasma*,] “ Suidas maketh a difference between *phantasma* and *phantasia*, saying that *phantasma* is an imagination, or appearance, or sight of a thing which is not, as are those sights whiche men in their sleepe do thinke they see: but that *phantasia* is the seeing of that only which is in very deeds.” *Lavaterus*, 1572. HENDERSON.

70. —your brother *Cassius*—] *Cassius* married *Junia*, Brutus' sister. STEEVENS.

78. —of favour.] Any distinction of countenance. JOHNSON.

86. *For if thou path thy native semblance on*,] If thou walk in thy true form. JOHNSON.

The same verb is used by Drayton in his *Polyolbion*, Song II:

“ Where, from the neighbouring hills, her passage Wey doth *path*.”

Again, in his Epistle from *Duke Humphrey* to *Elinor Cobham*:

“ *Pathing* young Henry's unadvised ways.”

STEEVENS.

120. *No, not an oath*.] Shakspeare formed this speech on the following passage in Sir T. North's translation of *Plutarch*:—“The conspirators having never



never taken oaths together, nor taken or given any caution or assurance, not binding themselves one to another by any religious oaths, they kept the matter so secret to themselves," &c. STEEVENS.

120. ————*if not the face, &c.*] So, Tully in *Catilinam*—*Nihil horum ora vultusque moverunt?*

STEEVENS.

125. 'Till each man drop by lottery.] Perhaps the poet alluded to the custom of *decimation*, i. e. the selection by *lot* of every tenth soldier, in a general mutiny, for punishment.

He speaks of this in *Coriolanus* :

"By decimation, and a tythed death,

"Take thou thy fate."

STEEVENS.

135. *Swear priests, &c.*] This is imitated by Otway :

"When you would bind me is there need of oaths," &c.

Venice Preserved.

JOHNSON.

135. ————*cautelous*] Is here *cautious*, sometimes *insidious*.

So, in *Woman is a Weathercock*, 1612 : "Yet warn you be as *cautelous* not to wound my integrity."

Again, in the second of these two senses in the romance of *Kynge Appolyn of Thyre*, 1610 :

"— a fallacious polycy and *cautelous* wyle."

STEEVENS.

177. *O, that we then could come by Cæsar's spirit, &c.*] Lord Sterline has the same thought: Brutus remonstrating against the taking off of Antony, says :

C

"Ah!



“ Ah ! ah ! we must but too much murder see,  
 “ That without doing evil cannot do good ;  
 “ And would the gods that Rome could be made  
 free,  
 “ Without the effusion of one drop of blood !”

MALONE.

196. ———*take thought*—] That is, *turn melancholy*.

JOHNSON.

So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, act iii.

“ What shall we do, Ænobarbus ?

“ *Think and die.*”

Again, in *Holinshed*, p. 833: “ ———now they were without service, which caused them to *take thought*, insomuch that some died by the way,” &c.

STEEVENS.

The precise meaning of *take thought* may be learned from the following passage in St. Matthew, where the verb *μεσπρωω*, which signifies to *anticipate*, or *forebode evil*, is so rendered: “ *Take no thought* for the morrow: for the morrow shall *take thought* for the things of itself; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” —Cassius not only refers to, but thus explains, the phrase in question, when, in answer to the assertion of Brutus concerning Antony, act iii line 156:

“ I know, that we shall have him well to friend” — he replies:

“ I wish we may: but yet have I a mind

“ That *fears* him much; and my *misgiving* still

“ Falls shrewdly to the purpose.”

To *take thought* then, in this instance, is not to *turn melancholy*,



*melancholy, whatever Think may be in Antony and Cleopatra.* HENLEY.

198. ———company] *Company* is here used in a disreputable sense. See a note on the word *companion*, act iv. line 263. HENLEY.

206. *Quite from the main opinion*] *Main opinion*, is *leading, fixed, predominant opinion.* JOHNSON.

214. ———for *he loves to hear, &c.*] It was finely imagined by the poet, to make Cæsar delight in this sort of conversation. The author of *St. Evremond's Life* tells us, that the great prince of Condé took much pleasure in remarking on the foible and ridicule of characters. WARBURTON.

215. *That unicorns may be betray'd by trees,  
And bears with glasses, elephants with holes.]*

Unicorns are said to have been taken by one who, running behind a tree, eluded the violent push the animal was making at him, so that his horn spent its force on the trunk, and stuck fast, detaining the beast till he was dispatched by the hunter.

So, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, B. II. c. 5.

And again, in *Bussy D'Ambois*, 1641 :

“ An angry *unicorne* in his full career

“ Charge with too swift a foot a jeweller

“ That watch'd him for the treasure of his brow,

“ And e'er he could get shelter of *a tree*,

“ Nail him with his rich antler to the earth.”

*Bears* are reported to have been surprised by means of a *mirror*, which they would gaze on, affording their pursuers an opportunity of taking the surer aim.



This circumstance, I think, is mentioned by Claudian. *Elephants* were seduced into pitfalls, lightly covered with hurdles and turf, on which a proper bait to tempt them, was exposed. See Pliny's *Nat. Hist.* B. VIII.

STEEVENS.

236. *Let not our looks—*] Let not our faces *put on*, that is, *wear* or *show* our designs. JOHNSON.

242. *Thou hast no figures, nor no fantasies,  
Which busy care draws in the brains of men.]*

*Figures* occurs in the same sense in the First Part of *Henry IV.* act i. line 545 :

He apprehends a world of *figures*. HENLEY.

283. *I charm you—*] Thus the old copy. Pope and Hanmer read *charge*, but unnecessarily.

STEEVENS.

297. *To keep with you at meals, &c.]* “I being, O Brutus (sayed she), the daughter of Cato, was married vnto thee, not to be thy beddefellowe and companion in bedde and at borde onelie, like a harlot : but to be partaker also with thee, of thy good and euill fortune.” *Sir. T. North's Translat. of Plutarch.*

STEEVENS.

Here also we find our author and lord Sterline walking over the same ground :

“I was not, Brutus, match'd with thee, to be

“A partner only of thy board and bed,

“Each servile whore in those might equal me,

“That did herself to nought but pleasure wed.

“No—Portia spous'd thee with a mind t' abide

“Thy fellow in all fortunes good or ill ;

“With



“ With chains of mutual love together ty’d

“ As those that have two breasts, one heart, two  
souls, one will.” L. Sterline’s *Jul. Cæsar*.

MALONE.

297. ———*comfort your bed,*] Henry VIII. as we read  
in Cavendish’s *Life of Wolsey*, in commendation of  
queen Katharine, in publick said, “ She hath beene  
to me a true obedient wife, and as *comfortable* as I  
could wish.” UPTON.

In the book of entries at Stationers-Hall, I meet  
with the following: 1598. “ *A Conversation between a  
careful Wyfe and her comfortable Husband.*”

STEEVENS.

In our marriage ceremony, the husband promises  
to *comfort* his wife. COLLINS.

298. ———*in the suburbs.*] Perhaps here is an  
allusion to the place in which the harlots of Shak-  
spere’s age resided. See the *Note* on the word *suburbs*  
in *Measure for Measure*, act i. line 183. STEEVENS.

305. *I grant I am a woman, &c.*] So, lord Ster-  
line:

“ And though our sex too talkative be deem’d

“ As those whose tongues import our greatest  
pow’rs,

“ For secrets still bad treasurers esteem’d,

“ Of others greedy, prodigal of ours;

“ Good education may reform defects,

“ And I this vantage have to a vertuous  
life,

C iij

“ Which



“Which others minds do want, and mine respects,

“*I'm Cato's daughter, and I'm Brutus' wife.*”

MALONE.

308. *A woman well-reputed; Cato's daughter.*] This false pointing should be corrected thus:

*A woman well reputed Cato's daughter.*

*i. e.* worthy of my birth, and the relation I bear to Cato. This indeed was a good reason why she should be intrusted with the secret. But the false pointing, which gives a sense only implying that she was a woman of a good character, and that she was Cato's daughter, gives no good reason: for she might be Cato's daughter, and yet not inherit his firmness; and she might be a woman well-reputed, and yet not the best at a secret. But if she *was well-reputed Cato's daughter*, that is, worthy of her birth, she could neither want her father's love to her country, nor his resolution to engage in its deliverance. WARBURTON.

Nothing can well be more futile than such reasoning. It is obvious that, by the expression *well-reputed*, she refers to the estimation in which she was held, as being *the wife of Brutus*, whilst the addition of *Cato's daughter*, implies that *she might be expected to inherit the patriotick virtues of her father*. It is with propriety, therefore, that she immediately asks,

“Think you I am no stronger than my sex,

“Being so *father'd*, and so *husbanded*?” HENLEY.

322. —all the charactery—] *i. e.* all that is characterized



charactered on, &c. The word has already occurred in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. STEEVENS.

330. *Would you were not sick! &c.*] So, lord Sterline :

“ By sickness being imprison’d in his bed  
 “ Whilst I Ligarius spied, whom pains did prick  
 “ When I had said with words that anguish bred,  
 “ *In what a time Ligarius art thou sick?*  
 “ He answer’d straight, as I had physick brought,  
 “ Or that he had imagin’d my design,  
 “ *If worthy of thyself thou would’st do ought,*  
 “ *Then Brutus I am whole, and wholly thine.*”

MALONE.

364. *Cæsar, I never stood on ceremonies,*] i. e. I never paid a ceremonious or superstitious regard to prodigies or omens.

The adjective is used in the same sense in the *Devil’s Charter*, 1607 :

“ The devil hath provided in his covenant,  
 “ I should not cross myself at any time :——  
 “ I never was so *ceremonious*.”

The original thought is in the old translation of *Plutarch*: “ Calphurnia, until that time, was never given to any fear or superstition.” STEEVENS.

373. *The noise of battle hurtled in the air.*] See *As You Like It*, act iv. line 368. and Note. STEEVENS.

384. *Cowards die many times before their deaths.*] So, in Marston’s *Insatiate Countess*, 1603 :



“ Fear is my vassal ; when I frown, he flies,  
 “ *A hundred times in life a coward dies.*”

The first known edition of *Julius Cæsar* is that of 1623.

“ When some of his friends did counsel him to have a guard for the safety of his person ; he would never consent to it, but said, it was better to die once, than always to be affrayed of death.” *Sir T. North’s Translation of Plutarch.* STEEVENS.

386. ———*that I yet have heard.*] This sentiment appears to have been imitated by Dr. Young in his tragedy of *Busiris King of Egypt* :

“ ———*Didst thou e’er fear ?*

“ *Sure ’tis an art ; I know not how to fear :*

“ *’Tis one of the few things beyond my power ;*

“ *And if death must be fear’d before ’tis felt,*

“ *Thy master is immortal.*” ——— STEEVENS.

388. ———*death, a necessary end, &c.*] This is a sentence derived from the stoical doctrine of predestination, and is therefore improper in the mouth of Cæsar. JOHNSON.

394. ———*in shame of cowardice :*] The ancients did not place courage but wisdom in the heart.

JOHNSON.

399. *We were, &c.*] In old editions :

*We heard two lions* ——— The first folio :

—————*We heare* ———

The copies have been all corrupt, and the passage, of course, unintelligible. But the slight alteration I have made, restores sense to the whole ; and the sentiment will neither be unworthy of Shakspeare, nor  
 the



the boast too extravagant for Cæsar in a vein of vanity to utter : that he and Danger were too twin-whelps of a lion, and he the elder, and more terrible of the two.

THEOBALD.

Upton would read :

—————*We are*—————

This resembles the boast of Otho :

*Experti invicem sumus, Ego et Fortuna.* Tacitus.

STEEVENS.

435. *And these she does apply for warnings, and portents,  
And evils imminent.]*

The late Mr. Edwards was of opinion that we should read :

—————*warnings and portents*

*Of evils imminent.*

STEEVENS.

The alteration proposed by Mr. Edwards is needless, and tends to weaken the force of the expressions, which form as they now stand a regular climax.

HENLEY.

443. —————*and that great men shall press*

*For tinctures, stains, relicks, and cognizance.]*

That this dream of the statue's spouting blood should signify, the increase of power and empire to Rome from the influence of Cæsar's arts and arms, and wealth and honour to the noble Romans through his beneficence, expressed by the words, *from you great Rome shall suck reviving blood*, is intelligible enough. But how these great men should literally press *for tinctures, stains, relicks, and cognizance*, when the spouting blood was only a symbolical vision, I am at a loss



loss to apprehend. Here the circumstances of the dream, and the interpretation of it, are confounded with one another. This line therefore,

*For tinctures, stains, relicks, and cognizance,*  
must needs be in way of similitude only; and if so, it appears that some lines are wanting between this and the preceding; which want should, for the future, be marked with asterisks. The sense of them is not difficult to recover, and, with it, the propriety of the line in question. The speaker had said, the statue signified, that by Cæsar's influence Rome should flourish and increase in empire, and that great men should press to him to partake of his *good fortune*, just as men run with handkerchiefs, &c. to dip them in the blood of martyrs, that they may partake of their *merit*. It is true, the thought is from the Christian history; but so small an anachronism is nothing with our poet. Besides, it is not my interpretation which introduces it, it was there before: for the line in question can bear no other sense than as an allusion to the blood of the martyrs, and the superstition of some churches with regard to it. WARBURTON.

I am not of opinion that any thing is lost, and have therefore marked no omission. This speech, which is intentionally pompous, is somewhat confused. There are two allusions; one to coats armorial, to which princes make additions, or give new *tinctures*, and new marks of *cognizance*; the other to martyrs, whose reliques are preserved with veneration. The Romans, says Decius, all come to you as to a saint, for reliques; as to a prince, for honours. JOHNSON.



454. *When Cæsar's wife shall meet with better dreams.]*  
So, in lord Sterline's *Julius Cæsar*:

“How can we satisfy the world's conceit,  
“Whose tongue still in all ears your praise  
proclaims?

“Or shall we bid them leave to deal in state,  
“*Till that Calphurnia first have better dreams?*”

MALONE.

459. *And reason, &c.]* And reason, or propriety of  
conduct and language, is subordinate to my love.

JOHNSON.

502. —*the fates with traitors do contrive.]* The  
fates join with traitors in contriving thy destruction.

JOHNSON.

505. *Why dost thou stay? &c.]* Shakspeare has ex-  
pressed the perturbation of *K. Richard* the third's  
mind by the same incident:

“Dull, unmindful villain!

“Why stay'st thou here, and go'st not to the  
duke?—

“*Cat.* First, mighty liege, tell me your highness' plea-  
sure,

“What from your grace I shall deliver to him.”

STEEVENS.

526. *Enter Soothsayer.]* The introduction of the  
*Soothsayer* here is unnecessary, and, I think, improper.  
All that he is made to say, should be given to *Arte-  
midorus*; who is seen and accosted by *Portia*, in his  
passage from the first stand to one more convenient.

TYRWHITT.



ACT III.

Line 32. *HE* is addrest:] *i. e.* he is ready. See *Midsummer Night's Dream*, act v. line 110. and *Note*.

We are now to suppose the senate is seated.

STEEVENS.

33. ———you are the first that rear your hand.] This, I think, is not English. The first folio has *rears*, which is not much better. To reduce the passage to the rules of grammar, we should read—*You are the first that rears his hand.*

TYRWHITT.

42. And turn pre-ordinance—] *Pre-ordinance*, for ordinance already established.

WARBURTON.

43. Into the lane of children.] Perhaps the poet wrote :—“in the *line* of children,” *i. e.* after the method or manner of children. In *Troilus and Cressida*, he uses *line* for method, course: “——in all *line* of order.” In an ancient bl. ballad, entitled, *Houshold Talk, or Good Councel for a Married Man*, I meet indeed with a similar phrase to the *lane* of children:

“Neighbour Roger, when you come

“Into the *roto* of neighbours married.” STEEVENS.

51. Know, Cæsar doth not wrong; nor without cause

*Will he be satisfied.*] Ben Jonson quotes this line unfaithfully among his *Discoveries*, and ridicules it again in the Introduction to his *Staple of News*:

“Cry you mercy; you never did wrong, but with just cause?”

STEEVENS.

It



It may be doubted, I think, whether Jonson has *quoted this line unfaithfully*. The turn of the sentence, and the defect in the metre (according to the present reading), rather incline me to believe that the passage stood originally thus:

*Know, Cæsar doth not wrong, but with just cause;  
Nor without cause will he be satisfied.*

We may suppose that Ben started this formidable criticism at one of the earliest representations of the play, and that the players, or perhaps Shakspeare himself, over-awed by so great an authority, withdrew the words in question; though, in my opinion, it would have been better to have told the captious censor, that his criticism was ill-founded; that *wrong* is not always a synonymous term for *injury*; that, in poetical language especially, it may be very well understood to mean only *harm*, or *hurt*, what the law calls *damnum sine injuria*; and that, in this sense, there is nothing absurd in Cæsar's saying, that he *doth not wrong* (*i. e.* doth not inflict any evil, or punishment) *but with just cause*. But supposing this passage to have been really censurable, and to have been written by Shakspeare, the exceptionable words were undoubtedly left out when the play was printed in 1623; and therefore what are we to think of the malignant pleasure with which Jonson continued to ridicule his deceased friend for a slip, of which posterity, without his information, would have been totally ignorant?

TYRWHITT.

D

Mr.



Mr. Tyrwhitt's very ingenious conjecture is, in my opinion, strongly confirmed by our author's having used the verb, to *wrong*, in his *Rape of Lucrece*, in the sense in which he is supposed to have employed it here, as the passage stood originally :

“Time's glory is——

“To *wrong* the wronger, till he render right.”

MALONE.

72. ——*apprehensive* ;] Susceptible of fear, or other passions. JOHNSON.

So, in *K. Henry IV. Part II. act iv.* “——makes it *apprehensive*, quick, forgetive,” &c. STEEVENS.

73. ——*but one*] One, and only one. JOHNSON.

74. ——*holds on his rank*,] Perhaps, *holds on his* race ; continues his course. We commonly say, To *hold a rank*, and To *hold on a course or way*.

JOHNSON.

91. ——*Go to the pulpit, Brutus.*] We have now taken leave of Casca. Shakspeare for once knew that he had a sufficient number of heroes on his hands, and was glad to lose an individual in the crowd. It may be added, that the singularity of Casca's manners would have appeared to little advantage amidst the succeeding varieties of tumult and war.

STEEVENS.

99. Nor *to no Roman else.*] This use of two negatives, not to make an affirmative, but to deny more strongly, is common to Chaucer, Spenser, and other of our ancient writers. Hickes observes, that in the



Saxon, even *four* negatives are sometimes conjoined, and still preserve a negative signification.

STEEVENS.

111. Cas.] In both folios this speech is given to Casca. REED.

161. *O mighty Cæsar, &c. fare thee well.*—] A similar reflection is put into the prince's mouth on the death of Hotspur. First Part of *Henry IV.* act v. line 394.

—Fare thee well, great heart!—

Ill-weav'd ambition, how much art thou *shrunk*,

When that this body did contain a spirit,

A kingdom for it was too small a bound ;

But now two paces of the vilest earth

Is room enough.—

\* \* \*

165. ———*who else is rank :*] Who else may be supposed to have *overtopped* his equals, and *grown too high* for the public safety. JOHNSON.

220. ———*crimson'd in thy Lethe.*] *Lethe* is used by many of the old translators of novels, for *death* ; and in Heywood's *Iron Age*, Part II. 1632 :

“ The proudest nation that great Asia nurs'd,

“ Is now extinct in *Lethe*.”

Again, in *Cupid's Whirligig*, 1616 :

“ For vengeance' wings bring on thy *lethal* day.”

Dr. Farmer observes, that we meet with *lethal* for *deadly* in the information for *Mungo Campbell*.

STEEVENS.

235. *Friends am I with you all, &c.*] This grammatical impropriety is still so prevalent, as that the omission of the anomalous S, would give some un-



couthness to the sound of an otherwise familiar expression. HENLEY.

276. ——— *in the tide of times.*] That is, in the course of times. JOHNSON.

Dr. Johnson's explanation does not seem to reach the poet's idea. By the *TIDE of times*, I apprehend he means not *the ordinary course of things*, but *great occasions; emergencies of uncommon moment*: such as the *overthrow*, or *establishment* of empires. HENLEY.

278. *Over thy wounds now do I prophesy—  
Which like dumb mouths, &c.*] Shakspeare had, perhaps, in his thoughts an old play, called, *A Warning for faire Women*, 1599. It was once very popular, and appears to have been written some years before it was printed:

“ ——— I gave him fifteen wounds,

“ Which now be fifteen mouths that do accuse me:

“ In every wound there is a bloody tongue,

“ Which will all speak although he hold his peace.” MALONE.

281. ——— *upon the limbs of men* ;] We should read,

——— *line of men* ;

i. e. human race.

WARBURTON.

Hanmer reads,

——— *kind of men.*

I rather think it should mean,

——— *the lives of men* ;

unless we read,

——— *these*



——these lymms of men;  
That is, *these bloodhounds* of men. The uncommon-  
ness of the word *lymm* easily made the change.

JOHNSON.

I think the old reading may very well stand. Antony means only that a future curse shall commence in distempers seizing on *the limbs of men*, and be succeeded by commotion, cruelty, and desolation over all Italy.

STEEVENS.

289. *And Cæsar's spirit, ranging for revenge, &c.]*

“——umbraque erraret Crassus inulta.”

*Lucan, lib. i.*

“Fatalem populis ultro poscentibus horam

“Admovet atra dies; Stygiisque emissa tenebris

“Mors fruitur cælo, bellatoremque volando

“Campum operit, nigroque viros invitat hiatu.”

*Stat. Theb. VIII.*

“——Furiæ rapuerunt licia Parcis.” *Ibid.*

STEEVENS.

292. *Cry Havock—]* A learned correspondent has informed me, that, in the military operations of old times *havock* was the word by which declaration was made, that no quarter should be given.

In a tract entitled, *The Office of the Constable and Mareschall in the Tyme of Werre*, contained in the Black Book of the Admiralty, there is the following chapter:

“The peyne of hym that crieth *havock* and of them that followeth hym, etit. v.”

D i i j

“Item,



“Item, Si quis inventus fuerit qui clamorem inceperit qui vocatur *Havok*.”

“Also that no man be so hardy to crye *Havok* upon peyne that he that is begynner shal be deede therefore : & the remanent that doo the same or folow, shall lose their horse and harneis : and the persones of such as followeth and esorien shal be under arrest of the Conestable and Mareschall warde unto tyme that they have made fyn, and founde suretie no morr to offende ; and his body in prison at the Kyng wyll.—”

JOHNSON.

292. —*let slip*] This is a term belonging to the chase. The last editor cites the following instance in *Manhood. Forest Laws*, c. xx. §. 9. “——when any pourallee man doth find any wild beasts of the forest in his pourallee, that is, in his owne freehold lands, that he hath within the pourallee, he may *let slippe his dogges* after the wild beastes, and hunt and chase them there,” &c.

Again, Sir Francis Bacon, in his speech on the arraignment of the earl of Somerset, said, “He is not the hunter alone that *let slip the dog* at the deer, but he that lodges him.” HENDERSON.

330. —*countrymen, and lovers ! &c.*] There is no where, in all Shakspeare’s works, a stronger proof of his not being what we call a scholar than this ; or of his not knowing any thing of the genius of learned antiquity. This speech of Brutus is wrote in imitation of his famed laconick brevity, and is very fine in its kind ; but no more like that brevity, than his times were



were like Brutus's. The ancient laconick brevity was simple, natural, and easy; this is quaint, artificial, jingling, and abounding with forced antitheses. In a word, a brevity, that for its false eloquence would have suited any character, and for its good sense would have become the greatest of our author's time; but yet, in a style of declaiming, that sits as ill upon Brutus as our author's trowsers or collar-band would have done.

WARBURTON.

This artificial jingle of short sentences was affected by most of the orators in Shakspeare's time, whether in the pulpit or at the bar. The speech of Brutus may therefore be regarded rather as an imitation of the false eloquence then in vogue, than as a specimen of laconick brevity.

STEEVENS.

390. —————beholden to us all.] Throughout the old copies of Shakspeare, and many other ancient authors, *beholden* is corruptedly spelt—*beholding*.

STEEVENS.

431. *My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar,  
And I must pause 'till it come back to me.*] Perhaps our author recollected the following passage in Daniel's *Cleopatra*, 1593:

“As for my love, say, Antony hath all;

“Say that *my heart* is gone into the grave

“With him, in whom it rests, and ever shall.”

MALONE.

435. *Cæsar has had great wrong.* 3 Pleb. *Cæsar had never wrong but with just cause.*] If ever there was such a line written by Shakspeare, I should fancy it might have



have its place here, and very humourously in the character of a plebeian. One might believe Ben Jonson's remark was made upon no better credit than some blunder of an actor in speaking that verse near the beginning of the third act :

*Know, Cæsar doth not wrong; nor without cause  
Will he be satisfied——*

But the verse, as cited by Ben Jonson, does not connect with, *Will he be satisfied*. Perhaps this play was never printed in Ben Jonson's time, and so he had nothing to judge by, but as the actor pleased to speak it.

POPE.

I have inserted this note, because it is Pope's, for it is otherwise of no value. It is strange that he should so much forget the date of the copy before him, as to think it not printed in Jonson's time.

JOHNSON.

446. *And none so poor——*] The meanest man is now too high to do reverence to Cæsar.

JOHNSON.

459. *——their napkins.] i. e. their handkerchiefs.*

STEEVENS.

507. *For Brutus, as you know, was Cæsar's angel:]* This title of endearment is more than once introduced in Sidney's *Arcadia*.

STEEVENS.

513. *Even at the base of Pompey's statue,*

*Which all the while ran blood, great Cæsar fell.]*

Shakspeare took these very words from Sir Thomas North's Translation of *Plutarch*: “——against the very base whereon Pompey's image stood, which ran all a gore of blood, till he was slain.”

STEEVENS.

520. *The dint of pity]* is the impression of pity.

The



The word is in common use among our ancient writers. So, in Preston's *Cambyses* :

“Your grace therein may hap receive, with  
others for your parte,

“The *dent* of death,” &c.

Again, *ibid.*

“He shall dye by *dent* of sword, or els by chok-  
ing rope.” STEEVENS.

523. *Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.*] To *mar* seems to have anciently signified to *lacerate*. So, in *Solyman and Perseda*, a tragedy, 1599, Basilisco, feeling the end of his dagger, says :

“This point will *mar* her skin.” MALONE.

546. *For I have neither wit,——*] The old copy reads,

*For I have neither writ, nor words,——*

which may mean, I have no *penned* and premeditated oration. JOHNSON.

The second folio reads *wit*. STEEVENS.

568. *——seventy-five drachmas.*] A drachma was a Greek coin, the same as the Roman *denier*, of the value of four sesterces, 7d. STEEVENS.

575. *On this side Tiber.*] The scene is here in the Forum near the Capitol, and in the most frequented part of the city ; but Cæsar's gardens were very remote from that quarter :

*Trans Tiberim longè cubat is, prope Cæsaris  
hortos,*

says Horace : and both the Naumachia and gardens of Cæsar were separated from the main city by the river ;  
and



and lay out wide, on a line with Mount Janiculum. Our author therefore certainly wrote,

*On that side Tiber;—*

and Plutarch, whom Shakspeare very diligently studied, in the *Life of Marcus Brutus*, speaking of Cæsar's will, expressly says, That he left to the publick his gardens, and walks, *beyond* the Tiber. THEOBALD.

This emendation has been adopted by the subsequent editors; but hear the old translation, where *Shakspeare's study* lay, “He bequeathed unto every citizen of Rome seventy-five drachmas a man, and he left his gardens and arbours unto the people, which he had on *this* side of the river Tiber.” FARMER.

581. —fire *the traitors' houses*.] Thus the first folio. The second, and the modern editors read—fire *all* the traitors' houses; but *fire* was then pronounced, as it was sometimes written, *fier*. So, in *Humors Ordinary*, a collection of Epigrams:

“Oh rare compound, a dying horse to choke,

“Of English *fier* and of Indian smoke!”

STEEVENS.

598. *Scene III.*] The subject of this scene is taken from *Plutarch*. STEEVENS.

---

---

ACT



ACT IV.

*Line 1. A SMALL island,*] Mr. Rowe, and Mr. Pope after him, have marked the scene here to be at Rome. The old copies say nothing of the place. Shakspeare, I dare say, knew from *Plutarch*, that these triumviri met, upon the proscription, in a little island; which Appian, who is more particular, says, lay near Mutina, upon the River Lavinius.

THEOBALD.

A small island in the little river Rhenus near Bononia.

HANMER.

So, in the old translation of *Plutarch*: “There-uppon all three met together (to wete, Cæsar, Antonius, & Lepidus) in an iland enuyroned round about with a little riuer, & there remayned three dayes together.” That Shakspeare, however, meant the scene to be at Rome, may be inferred from what almost immediately follows:

“*Lep.* What, shall I find you here?”

“*Cæs.* Or here, or at the Capitol.” STEEVENS.

5. *Upon condition, Publius shall not live.*] Mr. Upton has sufficiently proved that the poet made a mistake as to this character mentioned by Lepidus. Lucius, not Publius, was the person meant, who was uncle by the mother’s side to Mark Antony: and in consequence of this, he concludes that Shakspeare wrote:

You



*You are his sister's son, Mark Antony.*

The mistake, however, is more like the mistake of the author, than of his transcriber or printer.

STEEVENS.

7. ———damn *him*.] i. e. *condemn* him. See *Winter's Tale*, act ii. sc. 1. STEEVENS

23. ———as the ass bears gold,] This image had occur'd before in *Measure for Measure*, act iii.

STEEVENS.

47. ———and our best means stretch'd out ;] The oldest copy reads :

Our best friends made, our means stretch'd ;  
The present reading was given in the second folio.

MALONE.

51. ———at the stake.] An allusion to bear-baiting. So, in *Macbeth*, act v :

“ They have chain'd me to a *stake*, I cannot fly,  
“ But bear-like I must fight the course.”

STEEVENS.

61. *In his own change, or by ill officers,*] In the subsequent conference Brutus charges both Cassius and his officer Lucius Pella, with corruption. STEEVENS.

119. ———every nice offence—] i. e. small, trifling offence. WARBURTON.

So, in *Romeo and Juliet*, act v.

“ The letter was not *nice*, but full of charge  
“ Of dear import.”

STEEVENS.

139. *I had rather be a dog, and bay the moon,*

*Than such a Roman.*] The poets and common people, who generally think and speak alike, suppose



pose the dog bays the moon out of envy at its brightness ; an allusion to this notion, makes the beauty of the passage in question : Brutus hereby insinuates a covert accusation against his friend, that it was only envy at Cæsar's glory which set Cassius on conspiring against him ; and ancient history seems to countenance such a charge. Cassius understood him in this sense, and with much conscious pride retorts the charge by a like insinuation :

—————*Brutus, bay not me.*      WARBURTON.

The old copy reads—*bait* not me ; but Dr. Warburton's emendation is strengthened by Shakspeare's having used the word *bay* in other places, and in the sense here required. So, in *Troilus and Cressida*, act ii. sc. iii.

“ What moves Ajax thus to *bay* at him ? ”

Again, in the Second Part of *K. Henry IV.* act i. and, in *Cymbeline*.      MALONE.

143. *To hedge me in ;*——] That is, to limit my authority by your direction or censure.      JOHNSON.

143. —————*I am a soldier, I,*  
*Older in practice, &c.]* Thus the ancient copies ; but the modern editors, instead of *I*, have read *ay*, because the vowel *I* sometimes stands for *ay* the affirmative adverb. I have replaced the old reading, on the authority of the following line :

*And I am Brutus ; Marcus Brutus I.*      STEEVENS.

145. *To make conditions.]* That is, to know on what terms it is fit to confer the offices which are at my disposal.      JOHNSON.



191. ————*than to wring*

*From the hard hands of peasants, their vile trash,]*

This is a noble sentiment, altogether in character, and expressed in a manner inimitably happy. For to *wring*, implies both to get *unjustly*, and to use *force* in getting: and *hard hands* signify both the peasant's great *labour and pains* in acquiring, and his *great unwillingness* to quit his hold. WARBURTON.

207. Bru. *I do not, till you practise them on me.]*

The meaning is this: I do not look for your faults, I only see them, and mention them with vehemence, when you force them into my notice, *by practising them on me.* JOHNSON.

223. *If that thou be'st a Roman, take it forth, &c.]*

This seems only a form of adjuration like that of Brutus, p. 87. l. 320.

“Now, as you are a Roman, tell me true.”

BLACKSTONE.

254. *Enter Poet.]* Shakspeare found the present incident in *Plutarch*. The intruder, however, was *Marcus Phaonius*, who had been a friend and follower of Cato; not a poet, but one who assumed the character of a cynic philosopher. STEEVENS.

256. *Love, and be friends, as two such men should be;*

*For I have seen more years, I'm sure, than ye.]*

This passage is a translation out of the first book of *Homer*, which is thus given in Sir Thomas North's *Plutarch*:

“My lords, I pray you hearken both to me,

“For I have seen more years than such ye three.”

STEEVENS.



262. *What should the wars do with these jiggling fools?*] *i. e.* with these silly poets. A *jig* signified, in our author's time, a metrical composition. MALONE.

263. Companion, *hence.*] *Companion* is used as a term of reproach in many of the old plays; as we say at present—*fellow*. So, in *K. Henry IV. Part II.*

284. *And, her attendants absent, swallow'd fire.*] This circumstance is taken from *Plutarch*. It is also mentioned by *Val. Maximus*. STEEVENS.

354. *There is a tide, &c.*] This passage is poorly imitated by Beaumont and Fletcher, in the *Custom of the Country*:

“*There is an hour in each man's life appointed*

“*To make his happiness, if then he seize it,*” &c.

STEEVENS.

A similar sentiment is found in Chapman's *Bussy d'Ambois*, 1607:

“*There is a deep nick in Time's restless wheel*

“*For each man's good; when which nick comes,*  
*it strikes.*

“*So no man riseth by his real merit,*

“*But when it cries clink in his raiser's spirit.*”

MALONE.

412. —thy leaden mace.] A *mace* is the ancient term for a sceptre.

So, in *Marius and Sylla*, 1594:

“————proud Tarquinius

“*Rooted from Rome the sway of kingly mace.*”

Again, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, B. I. c. x.

E ij

“*Who*



“Who mightily upheld that royal *mace*.”

STEEVENS.

429. *Well; Then I shall see thee again?*] Shakspeare has on this occasion deserted his original. It does not appear from *Plutarch*, that the *Ghost of Cæsar* appeared to Brutus, but, “a wonderful straunge and monstruous shape of a body.” This apparition could not be at once the *shade of Cæsar*, and the *evil genius of Brutus*.

STEEVENS.

445. *Thou! awake.*] The accent is so unmusical and harsh, 'tis impossible the poet could begin his verse thus. Brutus certainly was intended to speak to both his other men; who both awake, and answer, at an instant. I read:

*Varro, awake!*

WARBURTON.

### ACT V.

Line 5. — **W**ARN us—] To *warn* is to summon. So in *K. John*.

Shakspeare uses the word yet more intelligibly in *K. Richard III*.

“And sent to *warn* them to his royal presence.”

Throughout the books of the Stationers-Company, the word is always used in this sense. “Receyved of Raufe Newbery for his fyne, that he came not to the hall when he was *warned*, according to the orders of this house.”

STEEVENS.



10. *With fearful bravery,——*] That is, *with a gallant shew of courage, carrying with it terror and dismay. Fearful* is used here, as in many other places, in an active sense—*producing fear—intimidating.* MALONE.

19. *——keep thou——*] The tenour of the conversation evidently requires us to read—*you.*

REMARKS.

35. *The posture of your blows are yet unknown;*] It should be—is yet unknown. Yet the error is such, that it probably was Shakspeare's. MALONE.

46. *——Casca——*] Casca struck Cæsar on the neck, coming *like a degenerate cur behind him.*

JOHNSON.

77. *Messala, &c.*] Almost every circumstance in this speech is taken from Sir Thomas North's Translation of *Plutarch.* STEEVENS.

86. *——our foremost ensign.*] The old copy reads *former*, which may be right, as Shakspeare sometimes uses the *comparative* instead of the *positive* and *superlative.* See *K. Lear*, act iv. sc. 3. Either word has the same origin; nor do I perceive why *former* should be less applicable to *place* than *time.* STEEVENS.

107. *The very last time we shall speak together:*

*What are you then determined to do?*] *i. e.* I am resolved in such a case to kill myself. What are you determined of? WARBURTON.

109. *——of that philosophy,*] There is an apparent contradiction between the sentiments contained in this and the following speech which Shakspeare has put into the mouth of Brutus. In this, Brutus declares his

E i i j

resolution



resolution to wait patiently for the determinations of Providence ; and in the next, he intimates, that though he should survive the battle, he would never submit to be led in chains to Rome. This sentence, in Sir Thomas North's *Translation*, is perplexed, and might be easily misunderstood. Shakspeare, in the first speech, makes that to be the present opinion of Brutus, which, in *Plutarch*, is mentioned only as one he formerly entertained, though now he condemned it.

So, in Sir Thomas North:—"There Cassius beganne to speak first, and sayd : the gods graunt vs, O Brutus ! that this day we may winne the field, and euer after to liue all the rest of our life quietly, one with another. But sith the gods haue so ordeyned it, that the greatest & chiefest things amongst men are most vncertaine, and that if the battell fall out otherwise to daye then we wishe or looke for, we shall hardely meete againe : what art thou then determined to doe, to fly, or dye ? Brutus aunswered him, being yet but a young man, and not ouergreatly experienced in the world : I trust (I know not how), a certaine rule of philosophie, by the which I did greatly blame and reprove Cato for killing of him selfe, as being no lawfull nor godly acte, touching the gods, nor concerning men, valliant, not to giue place and yeld to diuine prouidence, and not constantly and patiently to take whatsoever it pleaseth him to send vs, but to drawe backe, and flie : but being nowe in the middest of the daunger, I am of a contrarie mind. For if it be not the will of God, that this battell fall  
ut



out fortunate for vs : I will looke no more for hope, neither seeke to make any new supply for war againe, but will rid me of this miserable world, and content me with my fortune. For, I gaue vp my life for my contry in the ides of Marche, for the which I shall liue in another more glorious worlde.” STEEVENS.

I see no contradiction in the sentiments of Brutus. He would not determine to kill himself merely for the loss of *one* battle ; but, as he expresses himself elsewhere, would try his fortune in a second fight. Yet he would not submit to be a captive. . BLACKSTONE.

114. —*arming myself with patience, &c.*] Dr. Warburton thinks, that in this speech something is lost, but there needed only a parenthesis to clear it. The construction is this ; I am determined to act according to that philosophy which directed me to blame the suicide of Cato, arming myself with patience.

JOHNSON.

136. —*give these bills*] So, in the old translation of *Plutarch* : “ In the meane tyme Brutus that led the right winge, sent litle *billes* to the collonells and captaines of private bandes, in which he wrote the worde of the battell,” &c. STEEVENS.

153. *This hill is far enough, &c.*] Thus, in the old translation of *Plutarch* : “ So, Cassius him selfe was at length compelled to flie, with a few about him, vnto a little *hill*, from whence they might easely see what was done in all the plaine.” STEEVENS.

162. *Go, Pindarus*] This dialogue between Cassius  
and



and Pindarus, is beautifully imitated by Beaumont and Fletcher, in their tragedy of *Bonduca*, act iii. sc. 5.

STEEVENS.

165. —*time is come round.*] So, in *K. Lear*.

STEEVENS.

246. *Thou last of all the Romans.*] *Objectum est Historico (Cremutio Cordo. Tacit. Ann. l. iv. 34.) quod Brutum Cassiumque ultimos Romanorum dixisset. Suet. Tiber. Lib. III. c. 61.*

STEEVENS.

261. *I am the son of Marcus Cato—*] So, in the old translation of *Plutarch*: “There was the sonne of *Marcus Cato* slaine valiantly fighting, &c. telling aloud his name and his father’s name,” &c.

STEEVENS.

268. —*being Cato’s son,*] *i. e.* worthy of him.

WARBURTON.

270. Luc. *Only I yield to die:*

*There is so much, that thou wilt kill me straight;]*

Dr. Warburton has been much inclined to find *lacunæ*, or passages broken by omission, throughout this play. I think he has been always mistaken. The soldier here says, *Yield, or thou diest.* Lucilius replies, I yield only on this condition, that I may die; here is so much gold as thou seest in my hand, which I offer thee as a reward for speedy death. What now is there wanting?

JOHNSON.

275. *I’ll tell the news.*] The old copy reads:

*I’ll tell thee news.*————

JOHNSON.

278. *Safe, Antony;]* So, in the old translation of *Plutarch*: “In the mean time Lucilius was brought to him, who stowtly with a bold countenance sayd, *Antoni-  
tonius,*



tonius, I dare assure thee, that no enemy hath taken, nor shall take Marcus Brutus alive." STEEVENS.

292. *Statilius shew'd the torch-light, &c.*] So, in the old translation of *Plutarch*: "Furthermore, Brutus thought that there was no great number of men slain in battle, and to know the truth of it, there was one called Statilius, that promised to goe through his enemies (for otherwise it was impossible to goe see their campe) and from thence if all were well, that he would lift up a *torch-light* in the ayre, and then returne againe with speede to him. The *torche-light* was lift up as he had promised, for Statilius went thither. Nowe Brutus seeing Statilius tarie long after that, and that he came not againe, he sayd: if Statilius be alive, he will come againe." STEEVENS.

327. *Farewel to thee too, Strato.*] Thus the modern editions. I think, rightly. The old folio reads:

*Farewel to thee, to Strato, countrymen.* JOHNSON.

364. ————*save only he, &c.*] So, in the old translation of *Plutarch*: "For, it was sayd that Antonius spake it openly divers tymes, that he thought, that of all them that had slayne Cæsar, there was none but Brutus only that was moved to do it, as thinking the acte commendable of it selfe: but that all the other conspirators did conspire his death, for some private malice or enuy, that they otherwise did beare vnto him." STEEVENS.

368. ————*the elements*

*So mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up,  
And say to all the world, This was a man.*] So, in the *Barons' Wars*, by Drayton, Canto III:

"He



“ He was a man (then boldly dare to say)  
“ In whose rich soul the virtues well did suit ;  
“ *In whom so mix'd the elements all lay,*  
“ That none to one could sov'reignty impute ;  
“ As all did govern, so did all obey :  
“ He of a temper was so absolute,  
“ As that it seem'd, when nature him began,  
“ She meant to shew *all that might be in man.*”

This poem was published in the year 1598. The play of our author did not appear before 1623. STEEVENS.

THE END.









“ He was a man (then boldly dare to say)  
“ In whose rich soul the virtues well did suit ;  
“ *In whom so mix'd the elements all lay,*  
“ That none to one could sov'reignty impute ;  
“ As all did govern, so did all obey :  
“ He of a temper was so absolute,  
“ As that it seem'd, when nature him began,  
“ She meant to shew *all that might be in man.*”

This poem was published in the year 1598. The play of our author did not appear before 1623. STEEVENS.

THE END.





Annotations upon King Lear and Julius Caesar

London 1787

Coburg, Landesbibliothek -- C II 7/20#1

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11919424-7